

# A ROUMANIAN DIARY

1915, 1916, 1917

LADY KENNARD











THE NOONDAY MEAL

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BY

LADY KENNARD

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*



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## PREFACE

THIS little book contains a short summary of my own impressions of Roumania and the Roumanian people as chronicled for private interest during the several months I spent in the country previous to its entry into the war, supplemented by regular letters subsequently received from friends who remained to work there when circumstances had obliged me to return to England. To these latter I have added nothing of my own imaginings and omitted little of the original text. Only the form and mode of presentation are mine, but I found it easier, for the sake of making of the whole a consecutive narrative, to hold to the original diary form.

The idea of publication was only born in me when I realised how very little is known by the general public of all that one of our Allies has suffered of tragedy during the war. I submit the narrative most tentatively, with the hope that it is not altogether deficient.

I am indebted to Comte Étienne de Beaumont and Major Arion for the photographs which appear in these pages. Were it not for their kindness I should have indeed been at a loss, for topical photographs of any kind emanating from Roumania are practically unobtainable.

DOROTHY KENNARD

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# A ROUMANIAN DIARY

## CHAPTER I

*September 1915.*—I do not know quite what it was that brought us to Roumania. The war had been going on for over a year—perhaps that was the reason. There is, in every human being, a wild wish to get away, even if only for a time, from the place where he happens to be. And there was nothing, now, to hold us in England.

The journey was interesting. It promised, at the outset, almost insuperable difficulties. We left London with a party, all bound for Bucarest, all armed with every form of *laissez passer* and Customs facility. The Channel was netted from Folkestone to Boulogne, even in those early days, and we were escorted by an airship. It sounds well to say “escorted,” but I have a suspicion that its presence was accidental. Boulogne to Paris took seven hours, and at Paris we over-

nighted. Having missed the connection with Marseilles next day, owing to a change of time-table, we travelled in a troop train, sitting up the whole night through in superlative discomfort. At Marseilles we were warned that our boat was a marked ship, as she carried ammunition and a French general and his staff bound for Salonika; also sixty British mechanics for the Dardanelles. However, we decided to risk it, and the whole party got on board: eight people, twenty-four heavy trunks and twenty-six bits of hand-luggage. All went well as far as Malta.

Six hours out of that port, however, we had an excitement: a cargo steamer that we had been watching with the interest which any rival craft invariably provokes at sea suddenly seemed, at the distance of barely two miles, to be listing heavily, abnormally. We signalled to her repeatedly, obtaining no response whatever, and, from what we could see through our glasses, the boat appeared deserted, as did the little lifeboat bobbing up and down alongside of her. Suddenly she heeled right over, blew up and disappeared, and our captain frantically ordered, "Full steam ahead." It was presumed that the

submarine responsible was lying in wait for us also, and we spent an anxious night on deck. Arrived at Athens we were again ordered off the ship, and only the fact that we were to be convoyed to Salonika obtained for us official permission to proceed.

In Salonika we found no room available. The town was crowded out and had turned into a Tower of Babel. The British Red Cross Commissioner procured us a shake-down where we slept, three in a room. Here we were informed of the Bulgarian mobilisation and of the impossibility of proceeding, as had been our original intention, *viâ* Sofia. We were assured, however, that, could we but get to Nish, we would find there some means of going through to Bucarest *viâ* the Danube. Remained the problem of "getting to Nish," a difficult one owing to the fact that an important bridge on the Salonika-Nish railway line had broken down the day before. Thanks, curiously enough in the existing political crisis, to the activities of the Bulgarian consul, we got off next morning on the first and, as was subsequently proved, the last train through: a most uncomfortable transit. We sat up for twenty-four hours in a Greek

day-carriage, recently fumigated and smelling of the process. There was not one drop of water on the whole length and breadth of the train; in fact, from Salonika to the Danube we washed in Vichy water and Lanoline grease. Arrived at Nish we found a curious state of affairs: a Serbian village become through the misfortunes of war the country's capital. The Government officials worked in improvised shanties, the diplomats lived in mud huts. Our own Minister had been lucky enough to obtain as Legation a four-roomed hovel, and all the service in the local club was done by Austrian prisoners. In one of these I recognised a former waiter at the Carlton in London.

We had time here to lay in a small stock of food. The supply was limited, as the local population was preparing to evacuate the town before the expected German invasion, and was as chary of parting with stock as we were loth to take it. I even left behind me, as a parting gift, a few small boxes of English matches, worth their weight in gold. Our unpretentious, old-fashioned little train steamed out of Nish station at four o'clock in the afternoon. We were huddled together in two

second-class carriages with wooden seats, literally the best that the poor little country could afford. Incidentally it is worthy of note that our large, expensive party, travelling in a country where the population was destitute and the Government in as sorry a plight, paid not one single penny from frontier to frontier, "because we were Allies." Thus the *grand geste* of a little nation! A miserably uncomfortable night was survived, after a fashion. Again there was not a drop of water on the train, and I will not attempt to describe the picture which dawn revealed of our unwashed and tired faces. Progress was of the slowest, for we were constantly shunted to make way for troop trains. And such troop trains! Long lines of open wagons, where tired men leant against one another in the manner that leaden soldiers fall when a small boy piles them into his toy railway. Broken men these, who were still bandaged with dirty rags from field-dressing stations, and who clasped worn stumps of rifles as if to find in them some hope of future retribution upon the enemy who had brought them so low. We passed at one moment within a stone's-throw of the Bulgarian

frontier, and found massed units of these wearied troops resting by the roadside, waiting—for war was very near. Almost were we stopped at Nicoline and our train requisitioned; thanks, however, to the persuasive methods of the Serbian Government officials *versus* the military, we were allowed to proceed.

Twenty-four hours after leaving Nish we reached the Danube, where, after infinite parley, the captain of the only steamboat running (a Roumanian line) offered to take us from Prahova to Kalafat. The latter, a small Roumanian port, was reached at 10 p.m. Here we found darkness and no possible hotel; further, no train until the morning. We were literally stranded, for our captain declined to help us, and propelled the party, plus the voluminous luggage, gently but firmly landwards. He was obliged, he said, to make the return journey that night. A Heaven-sent Russian plutocrat who had been our fellow-traveller from Salonika took pity on our plight, which was also his, and chartered a special to take us all to Bucarest. After having moved our luggage into it with our own hands, we finally started off at mid-

night, having previously drunk to the Allied cause in bottles and bottles of beer, seated in a jovial row on the little Kalafat pier, whilst our dangling toes touched the water and spread ripples in the moonlight. There was a hot and heavy silence over the world, and waterfowl screamed a dirge for the dead who were to travel along that river towards the sea. For when we arrived in Bucarest next morning, it was to hear at the station that Bulgaria had declared war on Serbia overnight.

So here we find ourselves to-day, successful travellers, a little weary, perhaps, and singularly appreciative of food and lodging, but proud of the fact that it was an English party that caught the last train and the last boat through.

*October 1915.*—Our house is comfortable. It stands behind a wall and boasts a little garden; the street outside is cobbled. On the right hand I can see the gables of a splendid marble palace with a pillared portico, whilst smelling to the left the thatch which roofs a workman's cottage. These are symbolical of Bucarest fifty years ago and of Bucarest to-day. It is late autumn, and a chill is in the

air, but I have seen some wonderful sunsets.

This is a happy little town. Everybody smiles, and hardly any one has anything to do. One long shopping street, the Calea Victoriei, winds from the Chaussée towards the river, and passes the Palace and the two big hotels; here cheerful, informal shops flaunt superfluities at prohibitive prices. The Roumanians are all rather rich (I am speaking of the ones who live in cities), and love to dawdle here at noon, drinking "Zwicka" at the cafés, and lounging, men and women alike, against the plate-glass windows, which reflect both their own profiles and the silhouettes of passers-by. Street cabs roll smoothly here on rubber tyres, and the coachmen, resplendent in blue velvet and scarlet sashes, have a regal appearance. At first I hesitated to hail them, for they seemed too grand for hire, but soon discovered that self-respecting Roumanians own motors or nothing at all.

Life is childishly simple. We wake at eleven, and stroll towards the Chaussée at twelve. Bucarest owns several parks; two are pretty and one alone is fashionable. This latter is the Chaussée, a sort of grandchild of the Champs Elysées, but it leads out into

the open country instead of towards a Bois. Over a bridge where the trees end and fields begin lies the new aviation ground. Here lead all roads where motors travel, and here, towards evening, end all Roumanian "perfect days." For the whole population of the town rides, drives and strolls there in the sunset. Embryo airmen loop the loop and cast weird shadows on hangars which gleam against the black earth that turns to green in spring-time.

It is still warm and we play a lot of tennis. Whispers come of war, all friendly, for the general feeling is pro-Ally. But their tone is passive, and, as a nation, Roumania is still quite neutral. Nevertheless one hears murmurs of "Our Roumania," "Honour," "Fatherland," "Ces sales Bulgares," "Those unspeakable Boches," and seeds have been sown that will bear their fruit.

We are threatened with an influx of Allied missions evacuating Sofia. Belgrade has fallen, and the Germans are streaming into Serbia along the road we travelled.

In Bucarest, of course, we see the Germans in hundreds. Certain shops have to be boycotted as they are German owned, and it is gratifying to note that these are shunned

alike by the Roumanians and the Allies. At the races on Sundays one sees the enemy diplomats wandering near the railings, fat and pompous, and wearing overcoats of marvellous cut. Whenever a new village falls in Serbia, Capsa's Restaurant (the Ritz of Bucharest) resounds to German toasts and German voices. At a music-hall, however, to which I went one evening, the Roumanian audience sang and whistled "Tipperary" and hooted German phrases spoken on the stage.

Society is returning to town, for the rains are expected, and we have begun to play bridge and to pay calls. In a vague way conversation hovers about the war. But it occupies itself chiefly with minor social problems which crop up as a result of the whirling of the maelstrom. The following is an instance—

A Dutch subject, A, marries a German woman, B. A becomes, long before the outbreak of war, a naturalised Englishman in South Africa. When war is declared he is decoyed to Germany, caught and sentenced to death as a spy. His wife, left stranded in Roumania, is not allowed to live there without a passport, nor is she, without one, al-



THE REAPING



lowed to leave the country. The Dutch Government refuses to give her one as she is, by marriage, a British subject. Our own refuses as she is an enemy alien. The German Government also refuses because she is the wife of a condemned spy. Curious!

*November 1915.*—The seeds are sprouting. Bucarest is stirred by anti-Governmental agitations for war. One was held to-day, for which we hired a window, just as if it had been the Lord Mayor's Show. Troops patrolled the streets, some of which had even been brought from Ploesti. The windows of the German and Austrian Legations have recently been broken on various occasions, and the gates were triply guarded. Various politicians made incendiary speeches in the public square below us, urging the crowd to importune the King for war. They proclaimed that Roumania's prolonged neutrality spelt German slavery for ever. The crowd of some five thousand peasants, students and citizens actually charged the front rank of troops, massed to the number of five hundred men, before the Palace gate. Three or four citizens and several soldiers were wounded, several revolvers snapped, and one man was

bayoneted in the stomach and killed. Otherwise nothing happened. But straws show which way the wind blows, though it may take a gale to stir a nation that lives under thatch.

Seven thousand refugees have arrived in Roumania from Serbia, and Bucarest is busy organising relief committees which will provide hostels for them on the Danube. Torrential rain has begun to fall, and one shudders when one pictures their plight. Restive tidings come from Greece, equivocal and unsatisfactory. It is whispered that Bagdad has fallen, and rumour is rife, whilst German propaganda agents here have become extraordinarily active lately, and spies abound. Altogether we are restless and long for definite news of the outer world.

To-day the King opened the Chamber. I believe that there was quite a scene, and fist-cuffs came into play when some would-be patriots shouted, “Down with Hungary!” The King was well received.

I am going to spend a month in the country. Bucarest is too small to interest one for a long time on end, and one grows very nervous under the tension of waiting for something to happen which cannot possibly come to pass

for at least a year. The peasants here require investigation. They are children: happy, well clothed and well fed.

About a week ago I rode out very early towards the aviation ground. Two Roumanian officers were before me, trying a new aeroplane. Just as I arrived, the monoplane hummed away into the distance and the sunrise. I stopped to pass the time with the remaining subaltern, who had once been a dancing partner.

“What a gorgeous day!” I opened—obviously.

The little lieutenant smiled a somewhat doubtful assent, then shivered and offered me a cigarette.

“The ground is cold and very muddy,” he answered, with a furtive glance at the dimmed splendour of his new top-boots. “Six months of military service have not yet accustomed me to the material discomfort of early morning.”

We waited, silently. On every side stretched virgin soil, rich, black and fruitful. Perhaps it was the fact that the very earth had not been stirred for centuries that gave

to all things on all sides their calm, intense repose. Close at hand a peasant's hut belched forth charcoal fumes, and a woman whose feet were bare, but who flaunted on her head a scarlet kerchief, tended to children and chickens indiscriminately amidst a heap of refuse. Near by a shepherd, owner of them all, watched his flocks and looked at nothing. We strolled towards him.

“Do talk to him,” I said. “I may be able to understand a little.”

“Well, my man,” said my friend obediently, “how's the world treating you? Crops good?”

“I am a shepherd, Excellency.”

“Does it pay you well—bring you much money?”

“As well as may be, Excellency; one lives.”

“Ask him if he's happy,” I said.

“Do you like living so?” was the form my question took.

“Yes, Excellency. The lambs this year are fat and strong.”

“Impossible people,” said the officer; “they think of nothing but their sheep.”

“Well, you don’t give them much else to think about,” I replied.

There was a humming overhead. The lieutenant, slightly exasperated, pointed to the descending monoplane, for the shepherd had not raised his eyes.

“Do you know what that is?” he asked.

“No, Excellency,”—without interest.

“That is a machine which flies—it is called an aeroplane. You must have seen them before—you live here.”

“We sleep after noon,” replied the man ruminatively. Then: “Yes, I have seen a machine. It stopped on the road where Mitru lives, and left in the road a pool of liquid which was not water. Mitru’s pig drank there and it died.”

It was hard not to smile. “Shall I give him a ride in the aeroplane?” asked my friend quizzically.

“Won’t he die of fright?”

“Not he. You don’t know these people. Come, my man, I will take you in this machine and show you what it is to fly. Would you like it?”

“If it please your Excellency. The sheep are feeding and will not stray.”

After a few words of introduction and explanation to the other officer, who had landed a few hundred yards behind us, the shepherd was hoisted into his passenger seat and the aeroplane soared away.

The woman just raised her scarlet-crowned head and then resumed her sweeping. A few sheep scampered away terrified. I lit another cigarette.

“The English are funny people,” murmured my companion; “they do not like experiments themselves, yet they approve of them for others.”

“What do you call our war?” I asked.

“A certainty,” was the reply.

The trip was short; already the monoplane was circling round the little cabin. It swooped and came to earth where it had risen. The shepherd climbed down silently and stood, waiting.

“Well,” said the soldiers tentatively, “did you like it, or were you frightened?”

“I saw my sheep smaller,” was the answer. Then: “Have you a present for Zwicka?”

“I told you so,” said my friend; “they are impossible people.”

“But yet they have some common sense,” I amended, as I rode away.

If that is the Roumanian peasant as he is within a stone’s-throw of his capital, I want to know him in the country!

## CHAPTER II

*December 1915.*—I have gone back to the land with a vengeance! The soil pursues one into one's bedroom, so tenaciously does it cling and clog the footwear. My British brogues are ill-adapted to Roumanian country roads, and gather weight at every step. For a country bordering on the East, where "scenery" means blaze and light, the landscapes here offer peculiar contradictions. Although transparent skies and sunshine are in proper keeping, the colour scheme is dark almost to greyness through the neutral tints of earth and thatch and trees. It is winter and all branches are bare. I made a curious discovery to-day: a nail had worked loose inside my shoe, and I needed a stone. Perhaps if I had been willing to walk a mile and search at every step, I might have found one, but in retrospect this seems unlikely. This country, which teems with ungrown corn and oozes petrol, does not run to stones. Corn

means bread in plenty and petrol stands for motor traffic, but one thing more is essential in modern life, and that is material wherewith to build. There is none, and therefore you will find few houses on a Roumanian horizon. Village architecture runs to mud and thatch, and when proprietors are comparatively wealthy they invest in a coat of whitewash. Such buildings occasionally gleam amongst distant trees; the meaner ones are marked by wisps of smoke. Often the former are painted in flaunting colours and designs such as those which peasant women embroider on their Sunday clothes.

What strikes one most is the greatness of earth *qua* earth and the unimportance of people whose dead bodies go to make it. I have lived in desert countries where space is infinite and everything except humanity so immense that it touches the sublime. But the painter was delicate in touch, and his pictures are mirage in water-colour; here we are shown panorama, rich and solid, done in oils. When one has known and loved the furthest East, one meets with daily disappointment in these Balkan states. Sometimes, on moonlit nights, when the gypsies play for dancing,

one can trace in the cadence of their cracked violins echoes of the flutes which Persian shepherds play; but this is seldom. More often, alas! memory recalls the Blue Hungarian Band. There is little soul in the music, but plenty of inspiring rhythm. I went to a “Chindia,” or country dance, where all the villagers came, dressed in their best, and danced themselves to madness, whilst my own feet grew most unruly and aspired to fantastic evolutions inadequately realised.

They are a handsome race—swarthy sometimes, but with clean brown skins to veil the vivid gypsy blood. Often they are very fair, and the women recall tales of Circassian slaves. Men and women alike are supple and well formed; further, the native dress enhances the inherent grace. White is the predominating tone, for the loose shirts, open at the throat, are made of cotton, sunbleached and starched by drying in the wind. The women wear embroidered blouses of butter muslin caught together at the neck with narrow cord. This is tucked into a double apron which falls in two straight panels in front and behind. Sometimes these are of woven wool in rich dark colours, more seldom of silk,

and these boast glints of gold or silver thread. It is in colour schemes that the Roumanian peasant soul gives expression to ideals, and the whole scale of human personality is betrayed in the contrasting tones of apron-sash and kerchief. Roumanian femininity has never admitted that it had a waist; the man, *par contre*, is flagrant in boasting of his own. His shirt is cut and pleated into semblance of a kilt, and the coloured waist-band which marks his middle has learnt to rival the lines of Persian miniatures. Tight-fitting under-drawers of cotton, which tidy ankles and feet away into woollen socks, embroidered in black and white complete his costume; woe, therefore, to the rarity who suffers from ill-shapen legs! I never saw one. All are broad-shouldered, flat-backed and tall. Grown old, they have a patriarchal dignity all their own wherein combine the kindly resignation of the Slav and the fatalism of the East. Young and old alike have happy faces, and have not learnt to smile the smile which knows not laughter.

I do not think that a single peasant understands that the greatest war in history is being fought almost within sound of the guns.

They know, vaguely, that their enemies, the Bulgars, who cultivate, by force of tradition and superior knowledge, most of the vegetables grown for Roumanian towns, have been recalled across their border to fight. And for this fact they are as vaguely grateful, for a goodly proportion will never return, and a new industry glimmers as a possibly profitable opening for such enlightened villagers as have comprehended that the earth can foster other growths than corn. But, for the rest, why, even we ourselves have almost forgotten the war! Small wonder to it. The rains have washed the world, and winds from Russia stripped the foliage from all trees; nevertheless we are basking in a St. Martin's summer, and feel most wonderfully warm. We motor all day, long excursions in unkempt-looking cars, the hum of whose engines alone betrays their worth. Big properties often lie thirty or forty miles apart, but country-house standards are kept, and that with kinship to those in England. In Wallachia we are invited for week-ends of tennis, motoring and companionship; Moldavia offers gun and rifle sport of every kind.

Little sight-seeing is possible. We spent

the whole of one drowsy day in the silence of a nunnery. A square courtyard, where the paving-stones trapped sunlight, flanked the ennobled cruet-stand which was the church. The place is famed for age and sanctity. Faded paintings decorated the whitewashed exterior of the building, and a dreamy vagueness of incense and tired gold glimpsed through the archway of the door. There were several valuable ikons hidden in corners, and a modern one from Odessa leaned to catch the only ray of sunlight which reached the altar. This had been raised some few months before in honour of the Queen, who came once on a visit and taught the peasants to love her.

We made just one other excursion with an object on the day that saw us drive thirteen miles in a country cart to inspect steam ploughs lately arrived from England. Our way led straight across the fields, where motors cannot travel. I remember the owner of the property, who said to me: "These are the first machines to be introduced here; next year there will be dozens, and the crop will be a phenomenal one."

Two years' accumulation of unsold corn

already taxes the accommodating power of the country. Where is the object, therefore, of a record yield?

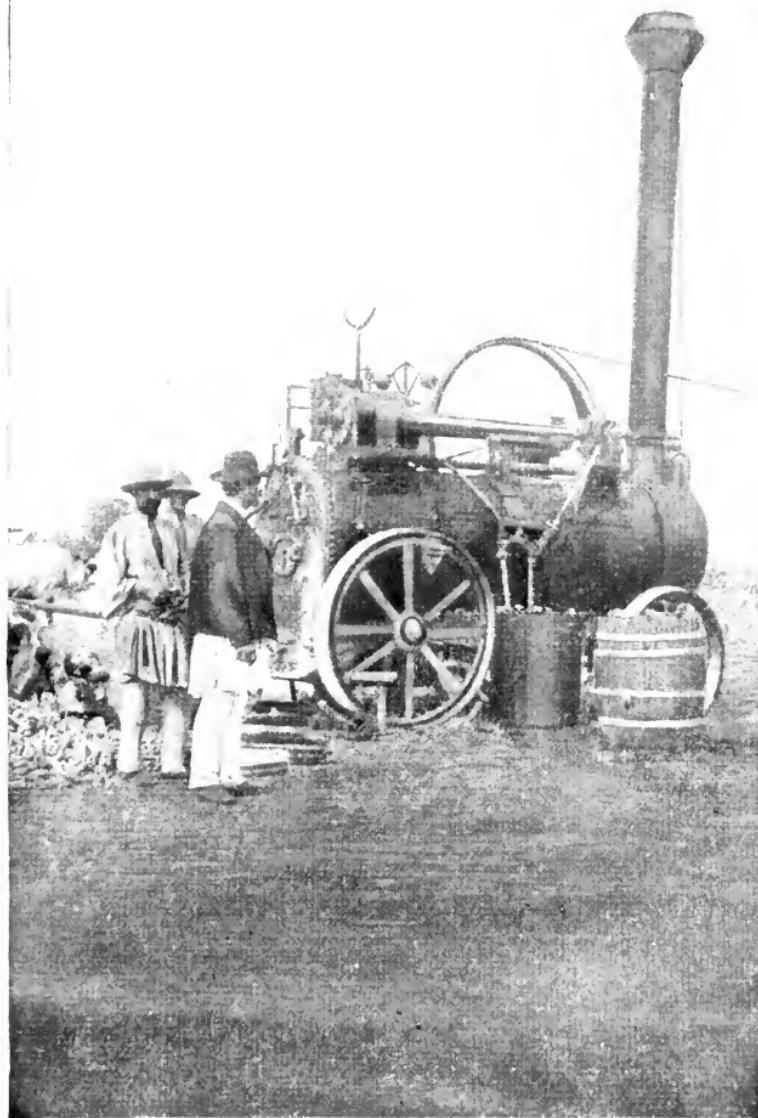
I have failed, somehow, most singularly, in the realisation of my purpose in coming and living outside the radius of the city, namely, the one of studying the Roumanian peasant at home. A thorough knowledge of the language is essential, and, even towards their fellow-countrymen, they are most curiously unapproachable. One can only marvel at the infinity that divides their mentality from that of their brothers in the towns. Even the look in their eyes changes after a few weeks in the city, and decidedly for the worse in every case. One must conclude that they are not ready yet for confinement in bricks and mortar. Besides, in such an exaggeratedly agricultural land, the earth holds primitive sway and guards most jealously children who are complete dependents. Despite the fact that they are rich, according to the standards of labourers in the West, beyond all dreams of acquisition and earning, they have remained most primitive, and I must honestly confess that at times their sense of cleanliness is completely dormant. Houses, hu-

mans and animals alike are indistinguishable, at a few yards' distance, against the immense brown background of the covering soil.

*January 1916.*—The month brought snow and found us back in Bucarest. Social life has begun—not the fastly furious exaggeration which novels had taught us to believe holds sway. All the ladies are busy rolling bandages and working at hospital supply dépôts. This not for the profit of the Allied troops, but for themselves, as a preparation for their own entry on the Allied side. A marked change has come over the atmosphere, and their hands have begun to grope towards us where only their hearts formerly inclined. A few there are amongst them whose sympathy is frankly hostile, and who hobnob at Capsa's with the Boches. But society treats them scurvily and shuns their environs. At dances, theatre parties—such as they are—and dinners we meet hosts of young people, amongst them many officers, and these chafe openly against the equivocal attitude of their Government. The girls burn with patriotism for France, a country which they have been brought up to reverence. Dowagers see in the future, when Roumania

joins, advancement for their sons, whilst old men envisage in their conversation dreams which their fathers taught them to cherish of a "Greater Roumania." Meanwhile the men of thirty-five or thereabouts are seldom seen. Some are away on their estates, preparing, it is said, to negotiate a great political deal in corn, others are perfecting the school of aviation recently inaugurated in Roumania according to system learnt in France. Others, again, are lost in Government buildings. We meet these latter occasionally, and they invariably find means to whisper or imply: "*C'est pour bientôt, notre entrée.*" Preparation everywhere, allies in all but name, hesitating, nevertheless, to take the final plunge into a whirlpool of horror which can prove but questionably profitable.

They work during the week, but on Sundays make holiday, and the afternoon sees them stream out in one gay, unending procession to the racecourse at the top of the Chaussée. Nothing happens there, for there is no racing except during the spring and autumn, but everybody sees everybody else, and—those persons whom everybody is with.



ONE OF THE NEW STEAM PLOUGHs



Hats still arrive from Paris, no one quite knows how, but presumably they take a three weeks' journey round the Baltic Sea. It is possibly more probable that they originate in Vienna. And the clothes are wonderful, and even more wonderfully expensive. The country must be made of money. I have never imagined that a place could exist on this earth when even the poor were so obviously rich. Not a middle-class family but can afford themselves a weekly hired cab or motor at a price of over a sovereign an hour in which to spend the afternoon!

We are tantalised by the importance, inadequacy and divergence of the news items which filter through devious routes from every corner of the globe. German newspapers are patronised for interest's sake, and we are choked with propaganda literature issued daily by the Wolff Bureau. The Bulgarian Press Agency publications provide entertainment for our evenings, but we all suffer from wistful longing for the *Daily Mail* on our breakfast table. Posts arrive from home with complete regularity, though the dates are prehistoric. The Roumanian papers, however, are fairly well informed.

Their columns make bewildering study, for the Allies *communiqués* therein rub shoulders with enemy news and offer kaleidoscopic information.

The Germans in our midst are somewhat officially *en évidence* these days, and one cannot deny that their effusive methods of propaganda bear fruit. Sometimes we come face to face with enemy diplomats, intimates often of pre-war days, in some restaurant cloak-room. British, French, Germans and Austrians alike have learnt to don a curious facial expression born of these encounters, which is a mixture of well-bred indifference and a frankly vulgar sneer. One avoids such meetings whenever possible, but this is a tiny town, and there are but some half-dozen streets where one can walk in comfort.

At regular intervals some politician in the Chamber makes an inflammatory speech urging participation in the war. Then rumour runs wild, and people begin to whisper over the morning *apéritif*, the Allied ministers are cheered, and influential pro-Germans avoid public appearances in the company of their German friends. But nothing is going to happen here for a long time, nor is it of

advantage to our cause that such unknown waters should be prematurely stirred. On every side there echoes the catch-word: "Nous sommes un si petit pays—qui sait ce qui peut nous arriver?"

No one at home can comprehend the complete isolation of this country. Straight through Austria and Germany lies the only reliable communication with the Paris they love and honour here as a religion. Roumania is not the originator of hypocritical tactics which profess friendship for an enemy so as to keep in touch with that enemy's environment. Social climbers will understand my point. All that Roumanians have to offer of private funds and sympathy they have already given. Not a woman one meets but has a *filleul* somewhere in the trenches, hardly a man who has no investments in some form of war loan. As a race they may be held to be somewhat flippant, but we have their individual friendship in return for what we have already given them. Should we offer them more, reserving threats against a possible rejection, they will probably accept it, because they trust us sufficiently to think that they will not be asked too high a price.

*February 1916.*—When the snow fell really deep and the surface of it froze, we packed an outfit for winter sport and entrained for the mountains. Sinaia is the obvious resort on these occasions, in the same fashion as it offers for the summer a respite from the dog days. The hotels stand open in winter, as does the casino in ordinary years. But this time the war had closed those treacherous doors.

The hotels are primitive for a country which inclines instinctively towards display of luxury. One cannot even obtain a comfortable bath. But Roumania borders enough upon Eastern countries to catch rays from their winter sunshine, and it is no hardship to spend long days out of doors. Bobsleighs and skis multiplied with marvellous rapidity, and those amongst us who ignored the possibilities of both were invited to go “footing” for miles over the snow. Blue-misted valleys and ravines where mountain water flowed made switchbacks for pointed hills of fir trees, and one recalled obscure parts of Switzerland, immortalised in guide-books. Villas sprouted everywhere, built in painted wood on the Swiss cottage system, and one was

hard put to it to remember that one was in the Balkans.

Little of import occurred here, but I myself, who am a maniac for scenery, carried away a mind-picture of the view from Santa Anna mountain, where we enjoyed a moonlit dinner eaten off rugs spread on the snow, and danced to music made by villagers in a wooden hut built to shelter travellers over-nighted on the peak.

As far as the war was concerned we remained passive spectators only, and that at an immense distance. But from Ploesti came the news that the year was to be a record one for petrol output. The Roumanians themselves are only just beginning to understand how rich they can so easily become; how should outsiders guess it? It appears that on the Austrian frontiers live stock has been surreptitiously sold in large quantities to the enemy. But one can hardly call this treachery; the prices offered were stupendous and the traffickers were peasants. Still, the tale is not a pretty one in view of the very stringent military laws recently passed, and I am glad to say that the offenders were duly punished.

*March 1916.*—We find, on our return to Bucarest, that a British Bureau has been established for the purchase of large quantities of corn. It is hoped that such a procedure, which will bring vast sums of money into the country, will discourage illegal frontier traffic such as has been discovered lately. The town is in an uproar of excitement, for the crops have lain unsold ever since the war started, and many land-owners have suffered financially. Now they are all clamouring for a share in the new market, for the quantity required cannot even begin to affect the overwhelming supply. There is, of course, an absolute impossibility of transporting the purchased grain to England for lack of routes and rolling stock, but it has been planned to store the acquisition all over the land in granaries built for and sealed by the British Government. All this is very feasible, but one dreads what may happen should Roumania come into the war and fail to stem a German invasion.

The direct result of the installation of the Corn Bureau has been a wave of popular enthusiasm for the British. Money talks in all languages, and the British have suddenly

become almost popular as the French have always been. If only Russia could invent a *beau geste* of this nature, this country would be completely won. Her great Northern neighbour still inspires this small dependent with a vague mistrust. Realising the situation, one cannot cavil at the existence of such a sentiment. Were the lines of communication through Austria once closed, Roumania would find herself relying upon one railway line to Petrograd for even the most insignificant requirements of modern life, not to mention the whole paraphernalia essential to modern warfare. Beyond a few villages where they have learnt a primitive cotton industry, a few leather factories and some alcohol plants, the population produces absolutely nothing except the corn and the oil from out its own mother earth. Meanwhile every necessity reaches quickly and in perfect condition all the gaps where it is required through existing channels, and Roumania wants for nothing, nor will she unless she abandon her neutrality.

This corn deal will be a nasty blow for the Germans, who have been trying to purchase the stocks for months. It is hardly to be

expected that they will take it lying down, and I fancy that the Government here will be faced with some unpleasant ultimatums in the near future. One can only hope that a loophole will be found by which this country can establish for itself a still firmer neutrality. Even those patriots who are most anxious for immediate participation in the war are obliged to admit that nothing is as yet prepared. It is rumoured that the next important political step here will be a general mobilisation. Only when that is well over will there be a possibility of looking round and seeing definitely what is going to be needed. The army is growing rather restless, and waking from a sleep of infancy to watch interestedly the games of older children. It is the best way to learn, but it takes a long time, and I am not sure that there will be time enough.

*April 1916.*—Spring has come, quite suddenly, and we have routed out dusty cupboards for tennis racquets. There is a scarcity of balls, which spoils our form. None are allowed to come through Russia, and the inferior quality of the few Austrian ones re-

ceived can be directly traced to a German shortage of rubber.

Racing has begun, and we drive out every Sunday, dressed in our best, to bet a little, stroll a little and drink a little tea.

The whole earth seems to have cracked in the same manner as do the buds on trees, showing an undercovering of delicate green, which is the sprouting corn. The peasants who work there are mostly women, for the army has in very truth been mobilised, and all the men are away digging trenches on the Austrian and Bulgarian frontiers. Roumania has entered the war in all but the actual declaration, and now it only remains to be seen whether an open outbreak of hostilities can be sufficiently delayed for the best to be made of her very considerable assets of enthusiasm and men. Several little incidents have occurred lately to prove how near we are to conflagration.

When the annual bazaar was held for the benefit of the Sisters of Charity, the wife of the Austrian minister received quantities of anonymous letters warning her that, if she held her annual stall, it would be boycotted and that she herself would probably be in-

sulted. The happening was not in the best of taste and one deplores it openly, but finds therein considerable satisfaction nevertheless. And the German representative was threatened with a thrashing at the club. Fewer German propaganda leaflets have fluttered lately, and the well-known Roumanian pro-Germans are keeping very quiet and are seldom visible.

As a country, however, and in the eyes of International Law, Roumania is still neutral, and Germany is letting sleeping dogs lie for some reason of her own. It is only a question of months now as to when the crash will come, and we are beginning, for the first time, to envisage it seriously. I have been making tentative inquiries as to the Red Cross supplies existing, and find them most woefully inadequate for the kind of need there will be. The hospitals are undeniably primitive. A few private individuals are preparing Red Cross equipments and beds on their estates, but such amateur efforts can only provide accommodation for a very limited number of the wounded who arrive in hundreds from a modern battle-field. And they could prove no more than comfortable

convalescent homes at best, from the nature of their distance from the capital and the lack of railway communications.

The existing political situation makes any form of preparation extraordinarily difficult, and Russia is chary of giving real transport help and facilities until the moment arrives for Roumania to be her open ally. The whole makes for a vicious circle singularly difficult to evade. For Germany will be obliged to act promptly and brutally on the day that open hostility is declared, yet no real help can be given here until such a declaration is made. We indulge, however, in numerous surreptitious activities and hope for the best, although disquieting thoughts are born when one pictures the future and all that it may hold for us of tragedy.

## CHAPTER III

*May* 1916.—The National Fête, the 23rd of May, marked the middle of the month, and a great review was held. Troops arrived in train-loads from all over the country for days beforehand and were billeted on the towns-folk. Despite the fact that all except the actual Guards regiments turned out in sober field equipment, which is grey-green in colour over here, I have never seen a spectacle that offered such a wonderful example of cinema-colour. Perhaps this was due to the fact that everything was so perfect and so small. The field-pieces almost glittered for the polishing which had been their lot, and all the ponies had been carefully selected to match the colour schemes of their various detachments. The ceremony took place in the morning on the length of the Chaussée. Tents and stands had been built in the night, and were thronged with spectators come, not to judge of worth, but to admire their relations.

Herein they found full justification, for it must be admitted, both as an example of individual physical perfection and as a military force, the Roumanian army calls for respect. The standard is so high that it has become a danger, for one is inclined to forget the one crushing and unavoidable limitation of individual numbers. All the military science of the world cannot make more men than the population of a country is competent to offer, and what are tens of thousands sent to battlefields where one has learnt to count the casualties in millions? King, Queen and Crown Prince rode at the head of their regiments and looked their best in uniform. The whole was a very lovely spectacle, but did not stand for warfare as it has developed during the last two years. When the beautiful little motor ambulances rolled past, gleaming with new coats of paint where red crosses caught the sunlight, the crowd was heard to murmur: "How wonderfully equipped is our army; even the details are perfect." But we others who had seen the wounded arrive from Mons watched silently and went home very thoughtful.

There are three classes of hospitals in

Bucarest: about a dozen permanent and well organised, attended by first-class surgeons. These have existed contemporaneously with the army and were instituted on French military lines, so as to be prepared for war, should war, by any chance, break out. In peace time they serve as sanatoriums and civilian hospitals, and we all go there when we are ill. Then there are about ten auxiliary hospitals, which have sprung into being quite lately and which are in the process of organisation. They are awaiting stores and supplies from home, and will probably be in working order by the time that war comes to us, provided, of course, that their stock arrives satisfactorily. What they lack are efficient doctors and nurses. Of the former there are a few, mostly students who have done superficial training in Germany or in France. There are no nurses at all. Even those who work in the established institutions are Roumanian amateurs now, because the women who originally ran them were Germans, who have lately been recalled to their own country. The Catholic nuns are really the most efficient amongst them, but they are limited in number and barely suffice for their own small

charity concern, which has existed for years and which is financed by their Order in France. The third class consists of all the supplementary adjuncts that are springing up daily all over the land, on private estates, in schools, and in private houses belonging to rich people in Bucarest. These are purely temporary concerns, and do not pretend to be anything else. In many cases only the covering sheds exist, so as to give them an excuse for a registration number. Beds and stores have, naturally, been ordered, but the people who are at the head of them are private individuals, and consequently ignorant of the first principles of medical requirements. Even the greatest optimists amongst us cannot count on them as anything but primitive dressing-stations for the future. I think that everybody has at last realised the very urgent need for preparation and reorganisation which has held fire so long, but it is by no means easy to know where to begin. One cannot embark upon satisfactory activities when one is as lacking as we are in every form of material. Germany and Austria, who supply Roumania with all that she requires for industrial purposes, can obviously not be

approached for these, her greater needs. And the Russian routes remain defiantly closed to all except the very irregular transmission of mails. A few small parcels arrive by letter post, but Roumania needs many shiploads of everything, from chloroform to aeroplanes, before she can even begin to consider their distribution.

The tragedy of the whole thing is that, whereas the country as a whole has comprehended the universal shortage, few individuals can be found to embark upon energetic measures for finding a solution to the problem of supplies. One hears talk of battles and sees them on the brink of participation, knowing the while that little short of disaster can come of it under the present circumstances. The historic British motto of: "It will all be all right in the end," is inspiring only for countries strong enough to survive preliminary blows and to deliver the hardest hits in the last round. We have the uncomfortable feeling born of living very near a volcano which is going to erupt.

Personally I cannot understand why the Germans are standing what they are getting out here. They seem to have accepted the



A TYPICAL WATER WELL.



facts of the corn deal, which is now an accomplished transaction. The corn is stored in British granaries and the money has changed hands. Consequently many people who have been comparatively poor for two years have suddenly become wealthy again, and find the condition pleasant. They rejoice quite openly over what they describe as Roumania's "entry," and can leave the Germans no vestige of doubt as to their antagonism.

These outbursts of enthusiasm are occasionally tempered by the fact that we get little Allied news of the outside world. The facts of the German repulse at Verdun leaked through to us, however, and helped to destroy attempts to maintain the fiction of Roumanian neutrality. One small section of society remains as openly "Boche" as it has always been. The business men who go to make it dabble in political intrigue and occasionally worry us by spreading rumours that the Government is to be evicted, but they are not very convincing and their propaganda is too obvious. There can be hardly any doubt now as to the direction in which we are rapidly moving.

A large party of British Red Cross nurses and doctors from Bulgaria recently passed through Bucarest. They had been released from a six months' captivity which had been their lot ever since the Bulgarian invasion of Serbia. They told almost incredible tales of the horrors of that campaign, and the look in their eyes gave evidence which disproved the possibility of exaggeration. Here they received a most enthusiastic welcome and were pressed to remain. But they only spent three days, and then we saw them steam northwards along the single railway line to Petrograd and home. I must confess that I saw lightning pictures of ourselves doing likewise and under similar circumstances in a few months' time.

Our days are spent in drawing up lists and posting them to England of things which we are likely to require. They are so vast that one becomes discouraged. But a beginning must be made. Whether the things will ever reach us remains to be seen, but anything is better than inactivity, which is what we all suffer from nowadays. This eternal waiting for something to happen is bad for the nerves, and yet it is inevitable. The longer we can

be left in peace "to wait," the better it will be for us all.

*June 1916.*—The heat is almost overpowering, but Bucarest is full. Many are the reasons invented as excuses for staying on in this sun-trap of heat-cracked plaster and dusty green; nevertheless we all know quite well why we are still here. War is spoken of openly, and the only thing that is inexplicable is the wherefore of this tarrying.

The Russian frontier has been closed for the last three weeks even to English mails. It is hinted that prodigious movements of troops are responsible, and that is satisfactory, for it has been officially recognised that Roumania is unable to take her first step alone. We chafe impotently against the consequent suspension of all news which is not telegraphic from the outer world. So very probable is it that our English papers could give us more reliable information about the local situation than we who are on the spot can obtain ourselves. One would suppose that, in a small town like this, any important happening such as an official pronouncement or a definite development in the critical situation would emanate immediately from

obvious and reliable sources and become publicly known, but this is by no means the case. Here we are told only the scantiest of details, and the little we hear is only rumour of the wildest kind. During the last month it has even been whispered that Roumania is going to "go German" at the last minute, and that all her preparation is for the supreme betrayal. But we can afford to laugh at such a monstrous accusation, for she is definitely committed in a hundred ways, and the evidence of our own eyes is the most direct contradiction of such a possibility as that we could desire.

The Government still talk of neutrality and affect a purely local preoccupation with home politics. These latter, however, are purely the result of opposing German and Allied interests, and the pro-Germans are in an individual minority, hopeless, despite the formidable support which money brings them.

I hear it openly discussed that the first Roumanian move will be a gigantic forward movement into Transylvania. From this country's point of view, the world-war will obtain its participation from one ambition

alone, and that the conquest of territories which are hers by blood ties and heritage.

Oh dear! This waiting is nervous work. I feel that I must do something active or take refuge in a sleeping draught. We are now informed that all is ready, but that nothing can happen until the Russian troops arrive. Certainly there is no sign of them yet. Meanwhile every day sees new outbursts of military activity in the town and in the suburbs. Troops march through in hundreds, and I cannot believe that the Germans are ignorant of all that is toward. On the other hand, if they know that war is spoken of as a question of weeks, perhaps of days, why on earth don't they assert themselves, instead of pretending to believe implicitly the reiterated official protestations of complete neutrality? One can only conclude that they are lying in wait for us in some unpleasant fashion, and that is not a comforting thought. Only one thing is certain, and that is the break which is coming. This state of things cannot possibly last much longer. The fuse has been lighted.

*July 1916.*—A month has passed and we are still here, still neutral, still on tenterhooks.

There is no news from Russia, but troops are said to have crossed the Danube.

All the ladies have been requested to report themselves at the Headquarters of the Roumanian Red Cross. We Englishwomen can go and work where we like, and I have offered myself to one of the big military hospitals. I was asked whether I had ever done any nursing, and was obliged to give a negative reply. But I was told that it "did not matter," my hands would be useful. I work there feverishly every day trying to accumulate as much knowledge and nursing information as is possible. Nurses are even more completely non-existent than I had realised. There is not a woman in the place who knows the first principles of hospital training such as we have in England, and I feel just as competent as are any of the others to use lavish quantities of disinfectants and to do exactly as I am told. The doctor who is to be my immediate chief is a very clever man; he knows how to teach me my job, and now it is only a question of time.

The days fly past. Each evening the conflagration seems inevitable within the next twenty-four hours, every morning sees us

sunk in apathy and summer stupor. And the heat is indescribable. We avoid meeting people; where's the use? They know now more than we do ourselves, and talking about the situation only aggravates the tension.

## CHAPTER IV

*August* 1916.—War is really coming. Our street to-day looks quite martial; there is a remount office at the end of it, and streams of men go in and out there all the time. We have been warned that all the telegraph wires to Austria-Hungary will be cut to-morrow. Of this the enemy envoys, apparently, know nothing. There is to be a Crown Council to-morrow night to deal with final private affairs, though it is hoped that the Germans will regard it as the terrified result of a haughty ultimatum which they sent Roumania this week. The attack is planned for to-morrow. Things are getting exciting, but one still hesitates to credit that the moment has come at last.

It is said that our first taste of warfare will be an aerial bombardment. I have ordered water to be kept in all the bath-tubs from to-day forward, and am having a tap connection provided between the garden hose

and the pantry. All the blankets are piled in the front hall. Perhaps in this manner we can ensure a slight protection against fire.

The Roumanians are not over-confident. In fact, they don't expect to begin by winning. They say there will be reverses, losses near the Danube towns; this because the Russians have not yet arrived and may come rather late. But the General Staff holds to the bait of Transylvania, and means to gamble high.

We sent out for the newspapers to-day and were told that publication was prohibited, presumably for fear of possible leakage about the attack, which aims at being a surprise one. Many of the houses where important personages live are watched. Now we just sit and wait for news from the first Roumanian front. The words seem strange as I write them. It sounds queer somehow, and horrible when I picture further and imagine what lies ahead of us. No one at home can understand the weak fear that undermines the *morale* of those who live in "Little Countries." Our soldiers fight with cannon, these men mostly with their hands, and they have only two each. And there are no great fac-

tories behind them crashing out ammunition; they are dependent upon train supplies over an independable route. Oh yes! it will soon be brought home to us, this war, which has only meant words to us women in England, where the Zeppelin raids were the only material taste we got.

The prolonged waiting is hard. There is little harder. It's like watching an accident avoided—or happen. I personally have never been frightened, and don't know at all how I should behave in a systematic bombardment. Our two little red English fire-squirts, bought a long while previously in a German shop, look singularly small and pathetic, and I cannot help wishing that they were bigger! I have packed the silver away, also the china. I have tried to busy myself all day with absurd superfluities, and all the time I find myself listening. . . .

Ch, I do hope that I'll have the luck to live through this war; it would be such *bad* luck not to! But out here there is no reason why any one should. Three German aeroplanes or one Zeppelin could play hell with this little town of trees and plaster. And Bulgaria is only one hour's flight away! However, to sit

and wait here for a year, anticipating war, and then to be extinguished promptly by a Bulgarian bomb, would be an injustice unworthy of the Almighty. It is really only an impersonal desire to be in at the finish, not the wish to live, that prompts these words.

*Later.*—Hurrah! the die is cast. All the telephone wires have been cut, the enemy envoys are to be packed off this evening, and mobilisation for active service begins at midnight. We have already been declared “under martial law.” War will be declared in Vienna, a little bit late, by the Roumanian minister. I met the German minister here walking towards his Legation this morning, and wanted to make a face at him. That is the way one feels.

*Later.*—Well! the passes are half taken, wounded are coming in, also prisoners. It is really war, and I am really in it!!!

Bucarest is quite calm. Orders have come round to extinguish all the lights in view of the Zeppelin raids which have actually begun. I had only one little green light burning in my house last night when the first one was signalled, and the police came and told me to

put it out. I was so snubbed that I did not attempt a candle, and sat through the raid in the dark.

All the church bells rang wildly when the signal came through, and the guns were infernal, popping like mad. I counted twelve searchlights and tried to believe in the actuality of the happening, but honestly, if I had not hurt myself by bumping into a tin trunk in the dark, I should feel to-day as if I had dreamt the whole thing. One thing, however, struck me forcibly, and will remain as a humorous recollection until I die: in this quiet town, lying peacefully under a starlit heaven with no sound of traffic to spoil the silence, the sound that deafened us was not the shooting, but the dogs!! Thousands of them barked, every age and size of yap imaginable, and I pictured them all with surprised, stiff noses, furious and impotent. They caught a nest of spies signalling to the Zepp, and we are expecting another raid to-night, as the first was probably only a trial trip. I hope they won't come daily, though there is nothing to prevent it—our aerial defences are decidedly primitive. These visitations upset one's sleep. Only five bombs were

dropped last night, and I feel somehow as if they were reserving themselves for something really nasty.

There was no butter to-day for breakfast, but we were very cheerful about it, because we heard that a big tunnel has been taken intact on the Predeal line, which ensures the army communications. It had been feared that the Austrians would destroy it. I suppose that they had no time; still, one hopes that it will not prove to have been a ruse that they did not do so. These soldiers are new to warfare and the enemy is not. It would be disastrous if local successes went to their heads.

*September 1916.*—All is still safe and quiet; so far we have not even had food difficulties. Zepps crossed the Danube last night and were signalled here, but there was too much wind for them, presumably, for they never arrived.

I have fallen into regular hospital routine, and have been given charge of one of the pavilions into which our own institution is divided. Needless to say that I feel singularly incompetent, but am bound to acknowledge that it had become a matter of neces-

sity to put some reliable person at the head of each. Most of the women who work there are young girls who have no notion of responsibility or method. They do not know enough to take the most ordinary of sanitary precautions. I go at breakfast time every day till late at night, and only get home for lunch, and supper in the middle of the night.

Everybody is in the highest spirits; the Roumanian advance is almost brilliant, and one can hardly credit the *communiqués* that come in, they are so splendid. Nevertheless I can't help feeling that this nation has not the faintest conception of the horrid things that might happen to it should things, by any chance, begin to go wrong; and the start has really been too one-sided.

*Later.*—It has been a wild twenty-four hours! To-day, at three o'clock on a sunny afternoon, I drove back to my hospital. In the open market-place, which is the half-way house, I noticed all the people looking up and gesticulating, and then for half an hour I was really in the war, for there were six Taubes overhead all dropping bombs.

As we neared the hospital shrapnel began to fall. The bombs, of course, fell all round.

I picked up one man wounded and unconscious and took him on with me in the car. A woman was killed at the gate of the hospital and one man died on the doorstep. There are barracks just near by, and all the soldiers got out of hand and fired their rifles madly in all directions. Two men wounded by their own comrades were carried in to us afterwards. We settled down to work, and had three operations between four and seven. Just as we were preparing to go home stretchers began to come in from different parts of the town where bombs had fallen. I wired home not to expect me till they saw me, and we worked on till 9.30, when all the operations were over. The wounded were all over the town, and all the other hospitals filled up too. The casualties were thirty dead and over a hundred wounded, for the streets were crowded when the Taubes came. The beasts flew round and round, thus hardly a quarter of the town escaped. All our airmen had gone to the front. I suspect spies of having informed the enemy; there was nothing to stop them and they did just what they liked. They flew very very low, and I saw the pilot's face in one quite plainly as he turned. I got

home to find that five large pieces of shrapnel had fallen in the garden. Apparently the confusion in the town whilst the actual raid was going on was terrific. The troops lost their heads and fired quite aimlessly, killing men and women before they could be stopped.

One couldn't be excited in the hospital, there was no time. If a doctor is cutting off things and calls out "pansement" or "acquæ lactæ" like a pistol-shot at you, you somehow find it even if you don't know what it is. One just works without the faintest understanding of what one is doing. After it was all over we collapsed, and sat in the model hospital kitchen with a petrol cooking-lamp for our only light (the electric light had been turned off at the main and we operated by candle illumination only), and drank hot tea and Zwicka and tried to recover. I don't feel that it is over yet; we shall have them back before the morning. They have only an hour to fly for more bombs. But twice in twenty-four hours is rather hard on one's nerves; and I forgot to say that they came last night too, but I was too sleepy to get up and listen.



SIFTING THE GRAIN



It was a pretty sight to-day with the puffs of white smoke like cigarette rings against the blue sky, a curious contrast to the terrorised faces round. The bombs fell absolutely all round the hospital, but did not hit it, thank God! The populace is raging, and will probably lynch some German women who are still allowed to be at large. All the men are, of course, interned, in the hotels. It has been a bit too strenuous with the hospital work thrown in, but it is exhilarating to watch the men recover. Up till now they are getting on splendidly in pavilion number four. We have over a hundred.

*Later.*—They came again last night—six Taubes. That makes three visits in twenty-four hours. I was too worn out to move, though the whole house shook and the thuds sounded uncomfortably close. This morning I am told that they were all round us, and that the rest of the household spent the night in the cellar. I think that I had the best of it. I remember thinking to myself: “If it is going to happen I had rather be asleep,” but I was really too weary to care. When one has stood for six and a half hours watching people under chloroform one does not mind

what happens after. My feet were wrapped in alcohol bandages, they were so sore, and it would have taken the whole German army to move me.

I was sent for very early by my doctor chief and we worked feverishly, the surgeons only half dressed in their uniform, myself in ordinary clothes, as there was no time to get into overalls. Twenty women and children are laid out in the mortuary. I have ceased to be affected by corpses, but I hate amputations. To-day, whilst we were operating, an actor who helps stood holding an artery in a pair of tweezers whilst the doctor tied, and suddenly said: "Shakespeare was right when he said——" and then he spouted in Roumanian the passage about "losing one's digits is worse than losing one's life."

On the way home I drove past a house where live some friends of mine. They had a most wonderful escape in the night; fortunately all are alive, no one knows why. Three bombs must have hit their house, which was all dropping to bits, and all the windows were blown into the rooms, and one wooden bed looked like a sort of fancy pincushion as a result. Every single thing except the four

people who lived there were shattered, a huge hole gaped in each bedroom, and there were apertures in the walls made by bits of the pavement forced in from outside.

It had ceased to be surprising this afternoon when those devils flew back to us again just after we had got to the hospital after lunch and were well started on an operation! But this time we nearly had a panic with the wounded. I stayed on in the ward with the helpless cases, for they said: "If you will stay with us, we are not afraid." The lightly wounded were sent to the cellar.

As I write it is about 6.30, and, according to the time the Taubes take to reload, they should be back by seven. I worked out the ethics of one's feelings towards them to-day at lunch and came to the conclusion that: (1) if one is killed one does not mind; (2) if one is wounded one only minds for a time; and (3) if one is neither one minds less. But something from outside should be done to help us, for this has become a bombarded town and is defenceless. Our own aeroplanes are needed at the front, but some French aviators are expected to-day, which will make us feel a little safer. The hospital, standing as

it does in the centre of a military quarter, is an objective for the raids, and I must honestly confess that I don't like going back there a bit. But we now have a dozen really serious cases which require hard nursing, and one knows that if one did not go perhaps no one else would.

The peasant soldiers who are brought back wounded from the front are paralysed with terror born of ignorance of the operating-table. But the convalescents help the *morale*, for they tell the others that "operation is good," and the poor wretches have begun to plead for "operation at once." I have heard some say: "Please, doctor, cut it off; do not try to save it," but so far he has rescued a lot of limbs by waiting. He himself, naturally, is learning daily, and I have heard him pronounce that "if he saves that leg, he will believe in anything." *Morale* makes three-quarters of a victory: the men, who are all children, say wistfully: "If you say that arm is all right, I will take the soup and go to sleep." Yesterday two men cried because the doctor postponed their operations till to-morrow, and one of the three who were to be

treated at once had a nervous collapse from pure fright.

It is all so wonderful to me! To see the big muscles cut away and through, to see a horrible wound grow daily less painful instead of a life lost through gangrene. A man pumping blood three days ago from a main artery is to-day eating heartily and getting well. Contrary to all existing regulations, I have procured permission to give hot tea and a cigarette after the operations when the men ask for it themselves and no active injury can result. It saves their *morale* and quietens their nerves. They have the wonderful recuperative power of undeveloped nervous systems, and many can stand almost anything without anæsthetics.

Curious! A month ago I felt faint when I saw blood or smelt a nasty smell.

*Later.*—The aviators have come and there was no raid last night, but we got no sleep, for we are creatures of habit and missed the noise. It is now 7.30 a.m., and they ought to be with us soon. The town is restless and shows signs of panic. Our servants rush to the cellar whenever the alarm bells ring to say that the Taubes have crossed the Dan-

ube. This is the new system: when the bells have spoken no one is allowed out. They sounded this morning very early, and we are sitting expecting a raid at any minute. As a matter of fact—there they are!!!

*Later.*—One bomb fell over our garden wall and smashed all the kitchen windows. I chased round the house to see the departing Taube's tails. The household is in the cellar, for the noise is still going on. Here they are, the raiders, coming back, according to sound—no, they are off again. The aeroplanes carry about six or eight bombs each, so if one can locate six or eight crashes to each machine in sight, you can feel more or less peaceful for a few hours. The day raids are the easiest to manage; one can see the way they are going and make for the opposite direction.

People have been hurt quite near our house; a bomb fell in the street just where I can't see the place from my window, killing three and wounding two who passed there.

A very shaky domestic has just carried up my breakfast. Personally I don't like the cellar, and prefer a part of the house where I can see and move about. The raid was a

short one and is already over. I presume that our aviators went up and did some chasing.

*Later.*—I went round to the hospital to find that a patient had been killed in his bed in pavilion number three. The men there are clamouring to be moved, and if this sort of thing goes on the whole place will have to be evacuated, though there is no alternative site where greater safety can be provided. But a panic would be fatal. It would spread to the town and bring about a rush for the trains.

The streets did not offer a pretty sight. Several dead horses lay about, and a horse bleeds prolifically.

It's an odd life; one has to think how many are standing it hourly in the trenches. No one can realise a real air bombardment until they have been in it any more than I did before I saw it. I know now what the Bible meant when it told us that a "heart turned to water." I am frankly frightened, and had no appetite for lunch!

*Later.*—We have had two days' peace and feel much better, but my nerve has decidedly gone. It's seeing the wounded that does it.

One does not realise the horrors properly until a raid is well over. Three of the poor legless fellows who were brought into the hospital died. I am trying to console myself with the remaining one, who will recover. The man who works a quick-firer in the hospital grounds blew his own stomach out and a child was killed beside him. They lay there for a day before they were found. Three men were blown to bits in another pavilion. I think that the Red Cross flags should be taken down; it is obvious that the Germans try for them.

Undoubtedly the enemy are well informed, because they always manage to come in force when our own fliers are away. They are scared of the Frenchmen and have never given them a chance. Apparently the night raids are the work of a Zeppelin and the six Taubes only come by day. They can see this town as easily as a map in the hand.

Zepp and Taube bombs behave differently, and procedure for avoiding them is contradictory. At least this is my own theory. The latter are small and pointed and timed, they pierce the floor and explode downstairs, so one climbs away from them; the former

explode on contact, so one makes for the underground. But night time is the time for sleep, and one really prefers to trust to luck when one is tired out. So far we have been lucky.

*Later.*—After forty-eight hours of peace they came again, the six Taubes. But this time it was simply a very amusing entertainment. As luck would have it our French airmen are at home, and the chase went right over our heads. Apparently they feel so safe that they come unarmed, and they were driven about distractedly all over the town and never dropped a bomb. Unfortunately we have, as yet, no fast machines, and they all got away; but, Lord! how they did have to hustle!

The Red Cross flags have been removed from all the hospitals, and the men are slowly regaining their nerve. The doctor and I carry harmless doses of bromide and dole it out to people who look as if they need it. Somehow I don't think that we shall have many more of these attacks. It was so obvious to-day that the enemy were demoralised by even the mildest show of resistance.

*Later.*—The warnings we get are beginning to bore us. We had two to-day and no raid. There are so many preparation whistles and then so many calming whistles that one is liable to get mixed up. I was in my bath with one and doing my hair with the other. I did not hurry over either performance. One is accustomed to anything nowadays, and the French airmen give one a feeling of security.

One of them had an unfortunate experience to-day. He was flying home in the twilight, back from a little private “strafe,” and travelling very low. The Roumanian soldiers fired at him under the impression that he was a solitary raider. He had to come down, and the populace set upon him with sticks and beat his head in and broke his jaw before they realised their mistake.

The news from our front is rather vague. In fact, we have had none just lately. The last that we heard was that the Roumanians had a firm hold in Transylvania and that all was going well. But that was a week ago, and there has been nothing since.

One cannot help feeling just a little wor-

ried. However, there is nothing to do except stick to one's own particular job.

All the wounded in my pavilion call me "Little Mother" now, and I have grown to love each individual man.

## CHAPTER V

*October 1916.*—I have not had the heart to keep this diary for the last few weeks, the situation has so completely changed. Our air-raid excitements (which, by the way, have completely stopped) seem to have faded into absolute insignificance and into a very distant past when one still had a sense of humour.

But it was all too true. The Germans were just—waiting. Waiting their own time, and that time came. We hardly know ourselves what has happened or how far and fast our army has retreated, but we know that things are very serious from the complete absence of reliable news.

We are told that French and British officers are coming. They may save us yet, but they must come soon. Some of the Roumanians were splendid. These the peasant sons of peasant warriors who fought and won through in the days when war was war, not

massacre. They are uncivilised enough to remember the fighting science taught them in folk-songs: "Strike—strike hard!"

The arrival of a French command may still save the capital, but one doubts it, for the passes are obviously falling with incredible rapidity, and the wounded are coming in in hundreds.

We now have thirty-five cases in each of our wards, planned to hold fifteen. They are packed like herrings, poor wretches, and lying two in a bed. We keep one room for gangrene cases; but what is one room? And there is no real operating-hall! Still one does the best one can. And the doctor is a hero.

It was inaccurate to say that the air raids are over—only they have become so unimportant that one forgets them. They have slackened tremendously, and our air defences have been made more or less up to date. Yesterday, for instance, twenty bombs were dropped near the station and did no damage. On the other hand, an enemy machine was brought down near the suburbs—the others all made off into the sunset.

Almost all the recent arrivals in the hospital have been operation cases. We are

treating three trepanned heads, and all are going to live and think again. Sometimes I can hardly credit the fact that this woman, indifferent to blood and white bones and gangrene horrors, is myself. I had been inside one hospital in my life, and that when I was the person who was ill. One of the men in pavilion four has lost his knee-bone, but there is a possibility, apparently, of screwing one on. Another has a beautiful new jaw of gutta-percha. Once we saw him smile, and the whole room rocked with the laughter of the others. But the doctor and I are very proud of him.

On the whole, if it were not so tragic, things would be rather funny. Everything seems so stark, staring mad. The town is beginning to panic, and I don't blame it. An attempt is being made to institute a Coalition Government, but I doubt whether they will find any combination to coalesce. We hear rumours of an advancing German army of 800,000 men, and half the town thinks that the Bulgarians have already crossed the Danube. If anything really serious happens we shall have great difficulty in getting away, for there are hardly any trains.

It sounds impossible, but I was told to-day that we shall probably have to pack up and leave in forty-eight hours' time, to spend the winter in—well, we don't know where, but in the snow, anyway!! And this not because the Bulgars have crossed the frontier, but because the Germans really have rushed the passes and are marching rapidly towards us.

I shall, of course, leave all my belongings behind, but I am prevented from starting to pack them safely away because that would frighten the servants. I tried to think of a few little things to take away as souvenirs, and then gave up in despair. For what is the use of trying to take anything in the two steamer-trunks which is all that will be allowed for our household? If only we knew where we were going and how far, and whether by sea or land, things would be so much easier.

We all had champagne to-night for dinner. Stocks are low, but if the Germans are really invading us—well, we certainly don't intend to leave anything worth having. We had a great discussion as to the rival merits of flight in a possible train or in our own visible motor. And we voted against the motor, for

we shall have two hundred miles at least to travel, and the motor is weak. It is possible that spies may blow up the only railway line when the last moment comes. A Roumanian general came to tea and said: "We shall leave by night." I said: "Where to?" He answered: "God knows!"—which was encouraging!

If I don't pack soon, I know that we shall all start in a hurry in the middle of the night for an unknown destination and that I shall have time to collect nothing. On the other hand, if I do pack, we shall most certainly sit here for weeks and end by not going at all. Perhaps the second alternative is the wiser one, for one can always unpack again. I feel absolutely incoherent.

Nevertheless, despite the general atmosphere of nervous uncertainty, we cling to the conviction that things cannot really be as bad as we are told. Possibly every time that the Government or the General Staff have bad dreams in the night, we shall be ordered to evacuate the town within thirty-six hours. But this is our first alarm, and as such we are bound to treat it seriously. We are assured that if the army can hold the remaining

passion for a fortnight, we shall be all right, for by that time Russian reinforcements will have arrived, also the French officers. But then we are told such a lot—that the Germans are already here, for instance. Anyway, the net result of this news is quite unnecessary discomfort. If I pack as I am urged to do, why, then I want to start. "To pack and stay is silly."

At present preparations are in full swing to expedite us in two days' time, at dead of night, in a darkened train, so as to fool German aeroplanes, who are certain to follow the train and bomb it. The banks are packing, and, as far as I can judge, that train will contain nothing but crowds of humans, innumerable tea-baskets, and millions of money, besides the Government officials. They are now planning to pick us up in a round of motor lorry loads, luggage included, at 1 a.m. It will be a sort of modern Noah's Ark. If the Germans succeed in cutting the only railway line, we shall have to run their bombardment at Constanza and go off in a Russian man-of-war to Odessa. Whatever transpires, we shall not know until we have passed Ploesti where we are going; we start "destination

unknown"—if we start. But we have been promised houses to live in, which complicates the packing. How on earth house-linen, clothes and sundries are to fit into two steamer-trunks, I cannot conceive.

Every time I go to the hospital nowadays the soldiers smile with pleasure and say: "So you have not yet run away?" They will be left behind, I suppose, poor wretches; and one can do nothing. Still, in a way they will be better off than we are. For really the prospect does not smile. All supplies of necessaries in the town are fast giving out. A great many of the shops are shut, and people rush about the streets looking distracted. Apparently we are going to lack soap, food and fuel, so we shall be dirty, hungry and cold. And this indefinitely, for if the Germans overrun the country, Russia will be far too busy supplying her own army to send us civilians anything at all, wherever we may happen to be.

Meanwhile some of the passes are still intact, and one cannot help thinking that a great deal of fuss is, perhaps, being made about nothing at all.

*Later.*—If this diary of mine does not tally



AT HER LOOM



with history when history comes to be written, it will not be my fault. We get no news at all from the outside world, consequently all we hear is rumour, and that contradicts itself every half-hour. We are now living in a house that is completely stripped of all but the barest necessities. Every time anybody wants anything, it has to be unpacked from the place, usually unfindable, where it was stowed away. It is now a week since we were told that we were leaving in forty-eight hours, and we are still here. I knew that that would happen. It took us two and a half days to reach this state of living, which touches the maximum of discomfort, and we shall probably continue in it for a few months and then unpack again.

The air raids have stopped. The last Zeppelin dropped bombs on a German internment camp, and sixteen fat Germans succumbed as a result of this miscalculation. The rest of the interned have now been spread about all over the town, and spies have not delayed in passing on this information, which appears to have discouraged the raiders.

The French General Staff is expected hourly, as are the Russian troops. On the

whole, the population has recovered remarkably well from the recent panic.

With the usual contradictoriness of human nature, I am convinced that this peaceful interval is only the lull before a very unpleasant storm, and feel, for the first time, that we shall really have to evacuate the town. Last week was such a whirlwind of flurried conjecture that one had no time to think, but we are now preparing with serious forethought for the discomfort that lies ahead. The hospital still claims most of my time, but most of the original patients are convalescent, and few have come in just lately.

Our latest excitement has been the discovery by a member of the American Legation of all kinds of horrors buried by the Germans in the German Legation garden. Cases of dynamite were found and tubes containing disease germs. It sounds incredible, and will produce headlines a mile high in our English ha'penny Press. Consequently no one will credit the tale. But it is true, and I have spoken of the thing with a man who assisted at the excavation.

What nobody seems to realise is that this

interval should be taken advantage of for the destruction of the immense stores of corn and oil lying all over the country. Naturally one hesitates to destroy outward and visible assets, but it is imperative that the Germans should not get them. To the simple layman's mind the obvious thing to do would be to pour one over the other and burn both. But when I suggested this I was laughed at. Insuperable difficulties lie in the way of destruction owing to the fact that the granaries lie immense distances apart in the heart of the provinces, and that communications are completely lacking. Effective measures would take weeks of time, which we will not be given.

*Later.*—The news is bad again, and a second fiat has gone forth: we are to be deprived of our luggage, as evacuation is really imminent.

I have never spent an odder day. We packed jam and sugar and all available soap into every spare corner. We all frankly forgot our lunch until past two and then found nothing in the house, so went without. We were told that we had twelve hours to finish up in and that the boxes would be called for

at midnight. Of all the many terrible packings that I have done on Eastern caravan journeys, this has been infinitely the worst. I know that I will wish that I had sent none of the things which now seem indispensable and that I will need all which I left behind. I have racked my brains to think of a place for three precious bottles of champagne, and have decided to stow them in a hold-all with the family eiderdowns. The linen-trunk is stuffed with jam—jam that came from England, and possibly the last that I shall ever eat. I get occasional attacks of maudlin sentiment over small possessions which I am obliged to leave; on the other hand, am abandoning articles of considerable value without a qualm. Not a bed has been made in the whole house, and, once the luggage has gone, we shall have to camp out on sofas.

I went to the kitchen to try and get a little tea, and when I came back found a large party of friends with their servants, luggage and children in the drawing-room, asserting cheerfully that they had come as they thought “it would be nicer for us all to go together.” I’m in the state of mind where I would say “Yes” to anything until the moment arrived

when I said "NO," then, if the person argued, I would shoot it—I mean her—him. All the luggage is stacked in the drawing-room—train luggage, house luggage, friends' luggage, servants' luggage. It is pandemonium.

Now I am lying down waiting for tea. Every bone in my body, every nerve in my mind aches with excitement. Of the military situation the English papers could tell us more than we know ourselves, for we hear not one blessed thing. Except that the luggage goes to-night and we to-morrow—if only we knew where to!!

Besides, the only certain thing is that the luggage goes to-night. For all we know the plans may have changed by to-morrow, and we shall be sitting here without one single practical belonging in the world. And then the problem will be to find us all sleeping accommodation, for there is a young army in the house. We tell every one who comes to stay and camp out. If we start it will be all right; if we don't, there'll be all night to make beds in and all next day to unmake them in; and there is no soap and there are no towels, and there will most certainly be no hot water ever again, because I packed the

last precious bundles of wood that remained to us into a suit-case with the boots!

We have just heard that there are 30,000 people waiting at the station. There is only one station. If this is true, we have decided that they can take our luggage, that the Germans can arrive in their thousands, but we will not move into a crowd like that unless we are pushed there—and pushed hard.

The cook has appeared quite ready to start with six dead chickens hanging on a string from her arm. She says that they will be useful. We are now going to dine off cheese and go to bed to wait for to-morrow.

*Later.*—We woke to find the luggage gone. My bed was funny: a little travelling cushion and myself upon it, covered with a dust-sheet and a fur coat. Everybody looks tired. And now we have been told that we are not going to-day and that it may not be necessary for us to go at all. I have told the cook to prepare two of her chickens.

The luggage returned to us at eleven with the message that all heavy baggage leaves to-morrow. And now we don't know whether this means "no luggage van with us" or a "trunk van on our train." It is an important

point. Should one keep necessary things back for the train and there turn out to be no van

— Oh dear! I am tired. And the unpleasant fact remains that all our linen, clothes and blankets depart into vague and unknown space at five o'clock to-morrow, and that we get left with nothing except the clothes we stand up in, four dead chickens, and a pot of jam which I unpacked and opened this morning when the trunks came home.

In short, we stay here, notified each day, if a new pass falls, to "go at once." In this case we start, and probably get told when we reach the train that the pass has been walked back into again and that we are to stay.

I went back to work after lunch, and found that a wounded Austrian prisoner had just been brought in. I asked him how they felt about the war in his country, and he answered in German: "Oh, it is sometimes a good war and often a bad one. I want to sleep." That is the way we all feel. The Queen is evacuating her hospital, and now perhaps they will have a try to do the same with ours.

A few English refugees turned up at our house to-day. One, a woman, said with a tearful smile: "Will my throat be cut?" I

don't think she was sure herself whether she was joking or not. We are all in a sort of hysterical state and laugh at anything. And we certainly look very funny. The house looks odd too, for there are queer makeshifts in every room where people slept, and hosts of strange belongings. So long as the trunks are standing in a solid-looking pile in the hall and within reach one can afford to smile, but to-morrow at this hour things will look very different if they have gone and we are still here. People cling to such funny treasures on these occasions. One man has his pockets bulging with war-maps, and all the women rain powder-puffs from every receptacle. Servants clasp their food, and a few stray children who have turned up are surrounded by bottles of milk. The house has become an hotel, because we feel lost and bewildered and prefer to keep together, though there is little conversation.

The streets are empty—not a cab is in sight. All the shutters are drawn in the shops, and the only sign of life is to be found about the hospitals. The weather is wonderful. Brilliant sunshine gives glow to the autumn tints, and the whole world is clean—

smelling of recent rain and wind. When I think of the cold and the snow and the unknown miseries that are before us all, of the disease which is bound to come, of this happy little town as I knew it first, barely a year ago, I want, like the Austrian soldier, to "go to sleep."

## CHAPTER VI

*November 1916.*—Half my prophecy came true: we are still sitting quite solidly in Bucarest. Luckily, however, our luggage never left us, for the panic quietened with incredible rapidity and we were told that all danger was over. The Germans were repulsed at the frontier during the days that we got no news and have not advanced since. The French General Staff has arrived and installed itself in a manner which gives us confidence most disproportionate to the small amount which reason tells us that it is humanly capable of accomplishing. A British aviator flew over in his aeroplane from Salonika, and this gives us the cheerful feeling that we are in touch with our own army. This despite the fact that a conquered Serbia lies between. The only direct consequence of the panic is that innumerable people seem to be lost, and the general mix-up is indescrib-

able. I myself simply cannot understand why the Germans are not already here.

It took us several days to reconstruct life along previous and already somewhat primitive principles. The various visiting families were sorted out and returned, together with their respective belongings, to their own homes. Necessities were extracted from our own trunks and we have resumed a normal existence, which comprises punctual though frugal meals and occasional baths. But the danger, to my mind, is by no means over, and only the top layers have been stirred in my trunks.

Our hospital is full up again with new arrivals, and I work there daily. The men are dears, and I have discovered that a few parcels of cheap sweets distributed make up for long hours of almost unbearable suffering. The few amongst them who can read invariably choose the Bible or prayer-books from out the literature at their disposal. Unfortunately I don't know enough of the language to ask them consecutive questions about their experiences, but I doubt whether they would be capable of coherent answering. All look dazed and worried when fighting is

mentioned. We have been entirely without news again for a week, and somehow we envisage from this disturbing happenings in the near future. We have been strongly advised to keep all belongings packed in case of a sudden emergency, because the next time the Germans advance in force they will be so near that we shall have but a few hours' notice, and it will not be a false alarm. The direct result of this is that it makes one nervous to leave the house at all. It would be so upsetting to come home one day and find everything gone! The only thing left to do is to try and appreciate the humorous side of life as we are living it.

Letters arrive from home written by people who know the wealth of this country, urging us to burn the corn—as if we kept it in a little box on our writing-tables! All energies are concentrated with trying to impress the people with the urgent necessity of doing so and of breaking up the petrol plants. It is hard to make them understand that the German invasion has only been delayed a little and that it will surely come. One can only be thankful for this short respite, which gives them a chance of making the enemy

conquest less lucrative for him than it would otherwise have proved. But the country folk refuse to destroy their property. They say that the British Bureau can destroy its own and that they will offer every facility but no actual help, whatever such ambiguity may mean. It is hard to blame them: corn stands to them for past, present and future existence, and one must be superhuman willingly to annihilate all three.

*Later.*—We are now completely stranded in an almost deserted town, for our belongings have actually left us. Indelibly branded upon my mind is a moonlit picture of a Government servant perched high on a mountain of trunks piled in inextricable confusion at dead of night into the motor-lorry that finally arrived, at half an hour's notice, to take them away. The man bumped off into the night surrounded by bottles of drinking water and waving farewell with a fresh-lit cigarette that glowed a cheerful red as he disappeared round a corner of the road. It seems quite impossible that we shall ever see him or his inanimate charges again, for we do not know where they went. Of our own departure we

hear nothing; in fact, the news is supposed to be better again to-day.

The youngest son of the Queen has died after terrible suffering. At such a moment it seems almost more than a woman should be asked to bear. Nevertheless his mother still works at the hospitals, and her soldiers love to see her.

One of our English aviators, newly arrived, turned up to-day after having been lost for nearly a week. Apparently he has had a most exciting time. After landing in Bulgaria by accident, he was chased by soldiers and managed to get into the air again, although his compass was out of order. He then discovered a river and descended low towards it, only to get shot at by a monitor. Instead of flying away, he pursued the boat and razed it with his machine-gun until the crew jumped into the water. He finally made a guess at the direction of "home," and got there!! He reports a "gorgeous time," and fell upon food here after three days' fast. This kind of story cheers everybody up.

Now that the trunks have really gone and we are left with nothing but the clothes we stand up in, makeshift beds our only resting-



HOUSE OF A WELL-TO-DO FARMER



place and ourselves fireless and uncomfortable, things seem to have really quietened down. We get innumerable Zepp alarms and occasional raids have begun again, but the constant presence of a few armed machines of our own has shaken the wonderful German nerve considerably, and their men usually make off without having done any serious damage. The Roumanian army is fighting magnificently on all the fronts, and there is just a chance of our holding out.

But the whole traffic of the country is naturally terribly disorganised, and really one wonders why anything gets done. A man who had to go to the Russian frontier recently on business took fifty hours to accomplish a journey that once took twelve. The poor wretch had to stand all the way between two windows in a train of fifty carriages, crowded inside and on the roof. He arrived back more dead than alive, having paid two francs for one slice of bread, and obtained no other food. If a big rush comes, it will be terrible on that single railway line, and I fear that hundreds will succumb.

Bucarest has become a veritable Tower of Babel. The streets are full of foreign uni-

forms all rushing in different directions and looking very busy. We are told that further quantities of French and British officers are due, also detachments of motor ambulances and Red Cross units. But the difficulties in the way of their actual movements are stupendous. A British Red Cross hospital, complete, with twenty-eight doctors and nurses, has indeed been heard of somewhere on its way out from home, but they are all stuck somewhere on the road and quite untraceable. When one hears of *contrestemps* like this and sees the daily horrors due to just the lack of the things which we know to be coming and which never seem to come, one grows discouraged beyond words.

I have been visiting other hospitals lately with a view to getting a general idea of conditions and supplies. The whole system is so disorganised that there is no need even for an official permit for such expeditions. Anybody is allowed to go anywhere, provided that one does not look like a German. I had been under the impression that our own hospital was primitive, but, alas! it is luxurious and well stocked compared to the others that I saw. The two best and grandest were over-

crowded in treble proportion to their powers of accommodation, but they had, at least, an atmosphere of antiseptics and stereotyped surroundings; all the others were pathetic. The men lay on the ground, which was covered with wooden boards. Some shared a mattress with four or five others, the rest lay without even a pillow to their heads. It was obvious that they had not been attended to for hours; this not from neglect, but for the reason that the doctors are working night and day to keep belated pace with the wounded who arrive in batches of several hundreds at a time. I passed the station, where a trainload of them had just come in. They lay out in the waste ground behind the building, in full sunlight, pitiful in their helplessness. They had no water and no food, just a few cigarettes, and I did not hear one single moan or complaint. I was told that these were the lucky ones, for arrangements had been made for them to be called for before sunset. During the short half-hour I spent there we had an air raid—quite a bad one. Over thirty bombs dropped near us, but fortunately no one was hurt, though one of the ladies who had come to distribute a little

food and drink was nearly buried by an explosion.

I am told on all sides that the chloroform will shortly give out, even though it is most sparingly used. As for the ordinary hospital requisites, they are simply non-existent. From the point of view of the unfortunate wounded, my expedition brought me to the pessimistic conclusion that it would be a god-send to them if the Germans captured the town. Therein lies their only hope of obtaining supplies.

*Later.*—The news is bad again, and the advancing Germans are reported to be in the plains and well over the Austrian frontier. Up to the present moment there are no signs of panic, and it is possible now that there will not be another even if we do have to leave in a hurry. For the population has not only learnt a lesson during the first scare, but also it has had time to get used to the idea that the loss of a capital does not necessarily mean the loss of a country. I fancy that a great proportion of the society people who have nothing to do with the Court or with the Government will not attempt to leave the capital even if the Germans arrive. What

would be the object? They are non-combatants and can do the Germans no possible harm, and it will serve the Roumanian cause better to leave every facility for those who have to go and "carry on" in whatever place they may finally land in, which place will be the less overcrowded for each individual who stays behind.

The warning has once again gone round to all who will have to leave when the moment comes for them to hold themselves in readiness for an immediate start, and I believe that, at the slightest further enemy advance, we shall really be off at last. The Queen has sent her children to the country, where they are supposed to be out of the immediate danger of air raids. She herself intends to remain here until the last minute, and is wonderfully plucky and calm.

A curious sort of social life has begun again, though business is at a standstill. Bucarest was obliged to release several hundred interned German clerks, as they were the only ones who could carry on the enterprises started before the war. A dangerous proceeding, but there was nothing else to do. They stand about in groups in the Calea

Vittoreæ, talking German, and made me so angry one day when I went for a walk that I went home and shut myself up. It was apparently absolutely vital to allow them their freedom—even the banks had not the *personnel* to work without them.

The Roumanians are optimistic as a race and fight instinctively against depression, but they like to be cheerful *en bande*, and become gloomy, individually, when they find themselves alone. So there are plenty of friendly little tea-parties, where the only thing lacking is the tea and the food that habitually supports it. Men, women and children alike work all day, but, when evening comes, they foregather and even make a little music. It is then that the wildest rumours spread. The French and British officers are very popular, and one meets them on terms of intimacy with their hosts wherever they find time to go. One sees less of the Russians.

The air raids, although ineffective in most cases, are annoying. They frighten the wounded and upset the people, whose nerves are still jumpy from the shadow of evacuation. And they keep alive in us, who would otherwise be tranquil, a constant fear of what

is still to come. My personal opinion is that the Government would do well to evacuate this town now, and as quickly and quietly as possible, so as to avoid the rush when the last moment comes, as it most inevitably will. It is so hard to know what to believe nowadays. One is told at breakfast that the Germans are well on their way back to Austria, and then hears after lunch that their scouts have been seen near Bucarest. One makes no plans for the morrow, and just lives on from day to day with the frightened feeling that all is not so well as we are told, and that we shall have a very complete and sudden awakening soon from the present interval of peace and quiet.

*Later.*—Quite an excitement!!! All the whistles are blowing madly and all the bells are ringing. This heralds another big raid. I wonder if it will really come off; we have not had a serious one for weeks, and one has begun to mistrust all these warnings which so often culminate in nothing.

Yes, here they come. The big new guns do make a noise compared to the miserable little pops we used to hear. *Blasé* as I have grown, this is unusually thrilling, and I am going out to see what is happening.

*Later.*—Well, that was the worst attack we have ever had. It lasted well over an hour. Bombs fell near the Bank and the Post Office; and, of course, in the vicinity of every hospital. The town dies away nowadays at the first alarm, the streets empty as if by magic, consequently few people are killed. Apparently thirteen bombs exploded in the garden of the country house where the Royal children were sent last week, but nobody was hurt, although the house was hit. Even the fires which started were safely extinguished. It must have been a narrow escape, and proves how well informed are the Germans of all current events.

Now that the excitement is over, we have other and more important things to think about, for the order has come to start, and to start as soon as possible, for JASSY. We are to be allowed to take some extra luggage with us, and are told that the original cases, despatched a fortnight or so ago, will be waiting for us when we arrive. It all sounds too good to be true after the scanty attention which we had expected to receive, and I am more thankful than I can say that the time for moving has really come. We have ran-

sacked the few shops that still do business, and bought up any remaining stores. There is no point in leaving anything for the Germans. Up to the present there is no sign of panic. We feel almost as if we were going off for a long week-end, as the absence of all heavy luggage makes everything easier.

I went to the hospital for the last time, though the men did not realise it a bit. They have not been told that the Germans are within marching distance of the town. Where's the use? It would only frighten them, and they already have enough to bear. They will discover it soon, and one hopes that they will not suffer. I hated leaving the men who were making good recoveries; one has learnt to take such a personal interest in the hard cases and to know all their little idiosyncrasies so well that one has grown fond of them as individuals. They seem so forlorn somehow, and stranded.

A few sportsmen have started off on expeditions to encourage the peasants to destroy as much corn as they can manage to set alight. Apparently a good deal has already been accomplished on the quiet, and we still have a few clear days ahead in which much

can be done. All that we hear now is rumour fantastic. The Government keeps its own counsel and refuses to give any information beyond the announcement that all British subjects would do well to leave Bucarest as quickly as possible, and that arrangements are being made for their journey, and for the small amount of baggage that remains to them. Nothing is said about the kind of accommodation we are likely to find in Jassy. It is a town which bears the same relationship to the capital as does Norwich to London, and was already slightly over-populated before the war. I was there once in the autumn of last year, and recall a sort of pretentious village of low-lying plaster houses each one of which was surrounded by a garden. Gardens are nice adjuncts to country life, but they do not promise enticing accommodation for winter months. There is in us all the worrying premonition that those amongst us who are not the very first arrivals there will have a quite remarkably uncomfortable time!! However, as there is only going to be one train and we shall, consequently, arrive together at Jassy station, the confusion can only begin when we get there,

so the only thing left for us to do as preparation is to learn how best to grab our hand-luggage and run.

We are all cheerful, and opinion is unanimous that it is satisfactory to be moving at last. I do not think that the populace has been told that the exodus is imminent. The town is far too quiet. When the real rush begins, there are bound to be terrible scenes.

News has just come of a steady German advance and that the need for haste is very urgent.

## CHAPTER VII

*December 1916, JASSY.*—Well, we have reached Jassy, and have not yet recovered from the surprise of having actually got somewhere and being able to sit down.

Early in the morning of our last day in Bucarest, we sallied forth into the almost deserted streets and collected two cabs after nearly an hour's search. We locked them bodily into our own courtyard, so as to make certain of their actuality. At 1.30 we heard that there was a real panic in the town, and we were advised to leave our house for the station at five o'clock. It was stated that the luggage—what remained of it—would be called for at two. At 5.20 we were still sitting dejectedly on top of it—naturally nothing had come. Time was a very serious object, and we decided to abandon all save the tea-baskets and travelling blankets, which could be piled into our two precious vehicles.

At the station we found a seething crowd

and a train standing, into which all Bucarest was trying to get. I positively refused to board it or even go near it, feeling somehow that there must be another one somewhere. We found the station-master and told him that we were foreigners, and he led us through dark passages (by this time it was six o'clock) to a distant platform, where we found a long line of carriages, engineless, dark and locked. Apparently no notice had been received that foreigners and diplomats were really leaving. We established ourselves firmly on the step of one of the wagons and sent into the town for a key. Within half an hour we were standing fighting for that carriage; it took that amount of time for others to find the empty train. The key arrived and we surged in, a seething mass of people, moving in waves. The doors were banged on the coat-tails of the last man in, and the train started before we had even formed a proper queue in the passage. Most of the women were offered seats, the rest of the passengers stood or lay on the floor amongst the baggage; there was no water, there was no light, there was no food. The clock had been put back a year or so and we

were back in Serbia on our journey to the Danube, only there were fourteen people in the carriage instead of eight. Russian soldiers were encamped in their hundreds on the platforms of the stations where we stopped; Russian nurses travelled with us in the dining-car; Russian officers stood in the passages and came in at intervals to ask our business —these were the Russians who had begun to arrive too late. It was pandemonium let loose. Those few who had tea-baskets fed the others who had none. Again and again until I was bored silly, my poor little kettle boiled until it boiled itself out and died. One man had bought a string of sausages during those last frantic minutes at the Bucarest station, and a Russian officer produced some bread and a little chocolate. That is all the food that fourteen people shared for twenty hours! What happened in the other carriages I cannot even imagine. There was no communication possible, for the passage-way between the compartments was completely blocked. The journey from Bucarest to Jassy lasts nine hours in normal times: in the twentieth hour of our journey we steamed into the station there, to find that the prefect of the town

had not been warned that refugees were coming and that nothing was forthcoming, neither accommodation nor food!!

We sat at the station for four solid hours, whilst all the people who had any energy left after our shattering night made rows in all directions. Where's the use of making rows on these occasions? It seemed to my mind of far greater importance to hunt for food. After all, one can sleep anywhere provided that one is sufficiently tired, and the Lord knows that we were that, but food is a serious consideration. I found some, of sorts, in the secondary buffet of the station. A howling mob came and went, and I fought most fiercely for two slices of bread and a slab of chocolate. Two ramshackle cabs subsequently appeared from nowhere and were besieged. No one could attain them, and so we decided to become sensible and form a queue. We went off in batches of four at a time, those two miserable horses making trips until one of them lay down. The prefect stood outside the station entrance giving the drivers addresses where to go. When we arrived at the place allotted to us, we found one room and no bed—it was the sitting-room of a

suburban villa. We had remained more or less cheerful until that moment, but it brought rebellion. There comes a time when one will accept no more, and we decided in our desperation to spend the night in the cab which had brought us, and which was attempting to sneak back to the station and fetch more tenants for that single room. Reason came to our rescue, and we returned inside it to the station to make inquiries about our luggage, which was supposed to have arrived at Jassy weeks before. The station-master was vague and distracted in his information, nevertheless he gave us the address of an Englishman living in Jassy who had received a large consignment of Bucarest baggage a few days previously. By this time it was pitch dark, but we climbed back undaunted into the faithful cab. Even the tea-baskets were still with us. The horses began to move in a sort of staggery fashion, but when we reached the foot of a steep cobbled hill which stretched into seeming infinity ahead of the carriage, they jibbed and refused to budge another inch. We got out and walked on for about half a mile according to the driver's instructions. An amazed Englishman opened

the door of a depressingly tiny house and we proceeded to explain almost hysterically fast, incoherent from terror lest he should close it upon us before we had time to finish. Yes, it was all right, our luggage was there I could even see bits of it in the hall; and the man invited us in. But we could see that something was worrying him, and when we got inside we found out what that something was. Two shake-down beds filled the tiny drawing-room and two British officers in pyjamas filled the beds. They had just arrived from Russia, and looked very nice and big and reliable. The house looked nice too, and warm and comfortable, and our faces must have told the owners that we had no intention whatsoever of leaving it, because they made no attempt to turn us out.

The two heavenly-looking beds were evacuated and turned out to be emergency sofas. The officers disappeared with their sleeping-bags into what was probably the pantry, and we sat up on the sofas drinking bread-and-milk. It was nice to see our boxes lying about, and we felt friendly towards the whole world. We had reached that form of hysterical weariness in which one can do nothing but

laugh, until, if one is a woman, one cries; and our kind hosts, realising this, departed and left us to the sofas and to a really wonderful sleep.

This morning a great many of our fellow-travellers keep on turning up. No one quite likes to inquire of them how they spent the night in view of our own obvious good fortune. Our servants, at least a few of them, have appeared mysteriously from nowhere. They can only hold up their hands and gasp when the journey is mentioned. Most of them discovered our refuge and slept on the floor of the kitchen. I don't think that any house in the world has ever had such a disproportionate number of people in it as has this one and so little food! Butter costs twenty francs a pound, and there is nothing else to be got except black bread. It is soft and fresh and I love it, but one can't live on it for ever. Of course, things cannot remain in this condition; in fact, the prefect came round this morning to say that we are to be given a house—a real house—of our own, and that soon. At present we are still waifs and strays at the mercy of people's kindness.

Refugees fill the town, there is not a room

to be had, and the real influx from Bucarest has not yet begun to arrive, far less that from the surrounding districts. Only two trains have come in, our own and the other which was in the Bucarest station when we left it. Telegrams from people who are lost are beginning to arrive, and one wire reached me from Bucarest to say that my motor was on its way and might be in Jassy within two days' time. The chauffeur, however, has always been an optimist. Luckily one of the servants who turned up this morning was the cook. She had succeeded in bringing three ducks with her intact, and so we are able to repay some of the hospitality so unceremoniously commandeered with a little food for the household.

This country town which has so suddenly been called upon to turn into a capital is by no means fitted for the part. Situated as it is close to the big oil-fields, it was already overcrowded before the war broke out, and the builders have been trying vainly for the last two years to keep pace with the steadily growing importance of the place. It is exactly like seeing a country bumpkin dressed up in evening clothes as one finds them

parodied on the musical comedy stage. Stone palaces built in modern Russian style brush the mud walls of peasant huts. The streets straggle about without aim or object and lead nowhere; there are hardly any shops. There is, or rather was, one restaurant near the station. I say *was*, because there will soon be nothing left of it. People literally besiege its doors, and the walls shake from the influx of the crowd. It offers practically nothing to eat. I met an unhappy couple who had struggled for two hours in the hungry throng, and who had finally succeeded in snatching a loaf of bread and a glass of mineral water, for which they were never asked to pay, as they never arrived within reach of the counter. What is going to happen when the rest of the refugees arrive from Bucarest, no one knows.

I believe that the Court got here this morning, but has not been seen. One presumes that the Royal Family at least will be given a roof to cover it. I tremble to think what would have happened to us had not these dear people taken pity on our plight. Dozens of our fellow-travellers are still wandering forlornly about in a despairing search for

rooms. Our arrival was totally unexpected, as Jassy had been without news from the capital for two days. No one knows what is happening in Bucarest, or how near the Germans are, or whether those left behind will still have time to get away.

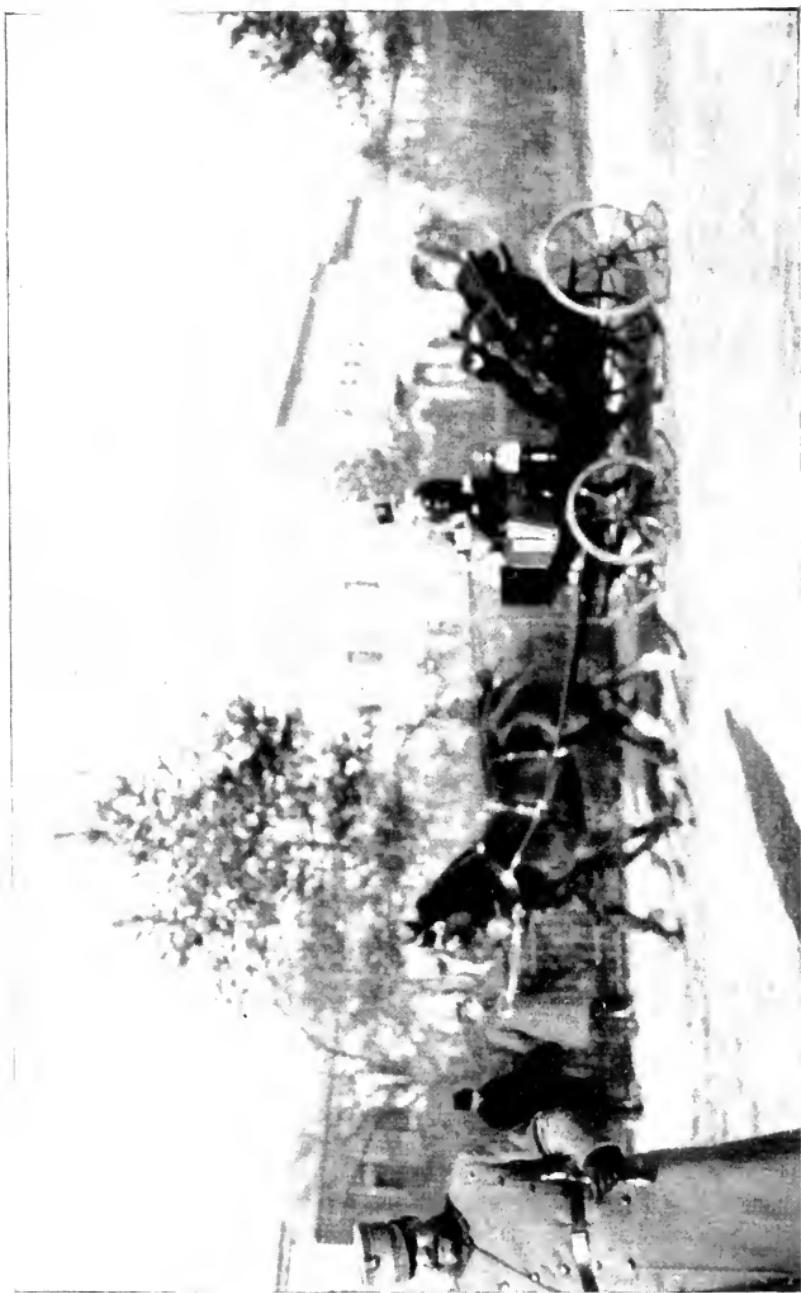
This town is full of Russians, and one hardly feels as if one was in Roumania. The frontier is pleasantly close, and its proximity gives one a certain feeling of security, because, for all we know, we may be flying towards it in two or three days' time. I don't see anything at present that looks as if it were going to stop an advancing German army, nor did I along the whole route we travelled yesterday. We live in an absolutely distracted whirlwind of uncertainty.

*Later.*—I do not know the day of the month or the week! We have spent three nightmare periods of time sleeping when and where we could, fighting for our food amidst struggling masses of humanity, unwashed and underfed.

And now, at last, there is peace. Peace, at least, for us, for we have been allotted a house, a palace, with six rooms and a garden in front of it where flowers grow. It has a

black hole in the cellar for a kitchen, and no servants' accommodation whatsoever. There is a shanty attached where we have stored the motor (which arrived in the middle of one night), the chauffeur, our empty boxes and the servants. They are not very comfortable, but they are better off than are most of their compatriots.

I don't know whom this house belongs to. My bed is made of pink-and-orange plush, and the room is decorated with plaster columns. The fireplace is built into the wall in an alcove at the height of my waist. It is supported with carved scrolls and bits of plastered woodwork that looks like organ piping. A quarter log of wood will just squeeze into the opening if one pushes hard, but we have not had the courage as yet to make fires—or beds. The kitchen has two plaster holes cut into the wall with an iron shelf across the top for a stove; the beds have no mattresses and no pillows. It is easier to live on bread and to sleep under rugs. Naturally no water runs, because there are no pipes anywhere, and all that we have we go and fetch ourselves from the pump that we have been lucky enough to find in the back yard. There are



II. M. QUEEN MARIE AFTER THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT



no bells, and the electric light only half works. That is to say, in some of the rooms it does not light at all, and in the others it lights half-heartedly and then goes out; personally I prefer the former, because one can prepare for it with candles. At present we have a good stock of candles, because I had the fore-thought to visit the nearest church and buy up all the wax tapers they had in stock. When they give out I don't know what will happen.

I have discovered that the Queen is lodged with her children in a tiny house just outside the town. Now that she is provided for it is possible that most of the people who came through on our train will find accommodation of some sort or other, though none of them can hope for anything but miserable discomfort. We ourselves have realised, and quickly too, how quite extraordinarily lucky we are.

A wire has reached us from some English friends in Bucarest saying that they had been waiting for twenty hours at the station without hope of a train, and that it was now rumoured that all trains are to be stopped, because Jassy could not hold more than the

crowds who are already on their way; to my mind, Jassy cannot possibly manage more people than are already here, and I think that it could easily dispense with a few thousand of those. The Germans are said to be twenty kilometres from Bucarest now, in which case they will be in the town within the next three days. There has been an enormous exodus on foot from the capital, we are told, quite apart from the hundreds who have left it in motors and carriages. All are on their way here, of course, and I cannot conceive how we are all to go on as we are living. It is past laughing. I can laugh if I am not hungry, but I am always hungry here. Our house food has given out, and we have had our last two meals at the restaurant. For lunch we secured an egg each and some bread, after an hour's fight for a plate—to be quite accurate, half an hour by the station clock.

No one knows where anybody else is living, and one meets people by accident only in the street. They are always running frantically so as to get ahead of some one else for something. One hardly remembers one's own address consecutively, and most people change it every day, because they are contin-

ually in the process of being handed on. There are hardly any cabs, and those few one sees invariably have four or five Russian officers sitting inside them. Never was there such discomfort, though there has been, of course, much greater misery. But for the former this life beats anything that one could ever have imagined. Our journey through Serbia wasn't in it; there, at least, we were always getting on and away, and with a haven in view; but here—well, we are just here, and, as far as we can judge of the situation, it can only get worse.

The servants wear expressions, one and all, which one had learnt to associate with family funerals. The women tell me that they have blue bruises all over them from sleeping on the floor. None of them have had anything to eat all day, and they one and all look extraordinarily dirty. This, however, is what we do ourselves. We did not bring much in the way of supplies, even in the original luggage which preceded us, as space was limited and we needed it all for blankets and house linen, so now we are "saving our underclothes," for we shall certainly be unable to have anything washed for weeks.

I possess two boxes of English soap, which have to be guarded as if they contained the Crown Jewels. We allow ourselves a soap wash once a day, and even then the cake dwindleth visibly. We have not had a bath since we started, and see no prospect of ever having another. The men decided to visit the public baths which exist, it appears, in the town, but one of the newly arrived English doctors flew round on a bicycle warning them each in turn not to go, because there was an epidemic of mange amongst the poor who patronised the establishments. Nice place, Jassy! And we have got to live here now until the war is over!

Luckily we are having wonderful weather and the streets are dry. What they will be like when the snow comes, I tremble to think. The air is cold, but it is still the fresh cold of late autumn; snow seldom falls here before January, and perhaps, by that time, we shall have been able to arrange for heating and hot water in some primitive way. I must confess that I don't quite see how this is going to be managed, but one's brain becomes singularly fertile of inventions when one is thrown upon one's own resources like this.

We have gone back to primitive life in more ways than one. As a first step, we have fallen quite naturally into a system of exchange and barter. I worked a profitable transaction this morning by bargaining one of my precious cakes of soap for a Dutch cheese and a dried fish from the Danube. This will feed us for two days, if carefully eked out with jam. Our house has become a sort of Bureau where the lost English congregate and find their relations. People wander in and out forlornly at every hour of the day, and leave their luggage for an hour or so whilst they go and forage for food and lodging. Occasionally they repay us by bringing back a loaf of bread or a pot of native jam which they have had the luck to appropriate on their expedition. And then we share it, sitting on the floor or on the beds. There are no chairs in this house as yet; we have been told that we may get some to-morrow when the owner has had time to sort them out from amongst his superfluous belongings. Where he and his family have taken refuge no one seems to know. They must hate us for turning them out, but the pill is in truth gilded, for they are remarkably well paid for it. Rents are

quite prohibitive, and people can invite the most fantastic prices for the veriest hovels and obtain their extortions without question.

*Later.*—A dishevelled spectacle of what was once a moderately well organised hospital has turned up from Bucarest. That is to say that the beds, linen and a few of the precious stores arrived in separate train-loads convoyed by the doctors. All the wounded had to be left behind. I was told to return to work, and went.

It was immediately obvious that there was urgent need to collect every scrap of material existent in this depleted town which could possibly be made to serve in the future, and so the chief surgeon and I hired a cab which held him comfortably and me hardly at all, and we asked the prefect to order the driver not to desert us under pain of capital punishment. Thus we sallied forth to probe the shopping resources of Jassy. Behind the first counter we were received with upraised hands and the announcement that “nothing could be bought because nothing remained to sell.” However, we refused to accept such a depressing ultimatum, and turned ourselves into a combined foraging and requisitioning

party. We opened drawers and boxes and invaded cellars and back rooms, whilst the dumfounded shopmen stood by in speechless fury. Honestly, I cannot myself understand in retrospect how it came about that we were allowed to do as we did. But our energy was rewarded. We discovered fourteen yards of invaluable rubber tubing in a bicycle repair shop, and all the catgut we needed in a violin-maker's store. It is wonderful what imagination will do for one in an emergency!! I unearthed 3000 yards of curious stuffs for miscellaneous use in making bandages, compresses and operation towels, etc., and my friend the doctor has a private machine for rolling the first of these. In fact, we collected such a quantity of useful things that the packages swamped our little cab, and we were obliged to hold up and commandeer a passing private motor which, luckily, belonged to a generous-minded owner, who did not object to taking the things home for us. I consider that we had a thoroughly successful day, which was unfortunately spoilt, from my own point of view, because I fell into a hole in one of the sidewalks and became so interested in extricating myself that I

dropped my bag which contained my money and the keys of all my trunks. When I discovered the loss, I could naturally no longer locate the hole. So now the boxes which had not yet been unpacked will have to be broken open, and that is the last straw!

Within the next few days we hope to have the hospital in working order again. There is cause for gratitude in that the enormous quantities of stores which are expected from England daily did not arrive when they were first hoped for, three or four weeks ago. We can now catch them *en route* for their original destination, whereas they would otherwise have been lost for ever as far as we are concerned, though the Germans would have benefited hugely thereby.

The streets are so crowded with Russians of every age and denomination that one hardly finds the indigenous population, which has most wisely retired behind its own locked front doors.

And more Russians pour in quite steadily from the north, whilst increasing numbers of refugees flock from the south. It is really interesting to find out how many hundreds

an overcrowded town can hold after it has doubly overreached the limit.

Everything is confusion confounded—and everybody is hungry.

## CHAPTER VIII

*December 1916.*—The situation, from a state of things chaotic, but directly traceable, has become completely and absolutely obscure. An ominous silence broods over us, not a telegram has come through for a week, and we are in the blackest ignorance of everything except Jassy. I have unpacked nothing. For all that we know, the Germans may be advancing upon us rapidly. This time, evacuation would mean—just the clothes we stand up in, and a few motors ploughing through a marsh of mud. For it has begun to snow and to rain and to blow angry autumn winds. The Russians have occupied this town and commandeered the hospitals. Provided that they hold at the front, it is the best thing that could possibly have happened to us. If they don't, it will prove to be the very worst, because people don't bother about other people when things go wrong.

The General Staff is established in a vil-

lage well within motoring distance of ourselves, but no news arrives except by hand, and then it treats of business only, and business was ever discreet.

As far as our material comfort is concerned, we are living in clover compared to what our friends are obliged to put up with. Our cook has managed to establish communication with a farm just outside the town and refuses to divulge the address. Her wisdom is proven, for ours is the only household where we are able to keep up the fiction of regular meals. Further, one member of the household gets a hot bath in rotation every day. It takes several hours to prepare and forms the subject of conversation for empty pauses—what it is going to feel like, what it did feel like, whether A's bath was better than B's, etc., etc. And it is difficult not to become pretentious on the strength of it. A never-ending stream of people of all classes passes through our door, the house has become a sort of club—it is the only building that manages to look like a resting-place in the town, and the cook occasionally invites strangers to assist at the birth of a cake. I have collected six wooden tables in the hall.

They stand in rows, and everything happens on them. In fact, one marvels at people having worked themselves up over any further form of furniture. It is so easy to point to a table when one is asked: "Where is your office, or bed, or cupboard, or kitchen?" and answer: "You'll find it on the big, or little, or white, or brown table."

I discovered that a quondam friend of mine had landed with her whole family somewhere in our street, and sallied forth yesterday to pay a call. Formerly she had owned, and cared for, a large country house on the outskirts of Bucarest, where we had often gone to dance after dinner. Apparently the fighting centred there when the Germans arrived, and those peasants who ran were shot down. She has lost everything; and I remember that, almost as intensely as she loved her possessions, she loved her peasants. I came home and—the words must be written—retired to my room and was violently sick. This after training in a hospital of carnage where I haven't felt a qualm. Human beings are such funny things. She looked so sad when she spoke of individual bits of furniture and sketches made in her garden that I suddenly

recalled all the little belongings which I had myself found so easy to leave behind and became almost hysterical. Really, to leave all that one owns is quite disgusting when dissected. *Que fais-je dans cette galère?* And now it is whispered that we may have to pack and run again, run faster, carry less, and have further to go. I cannot really believe it. Russians keep pouring through Jassy, not in hundreds but in thousands, and, even if they don't fight, their bulk will stand between us and the Germans, and the latter may only look at them and then stand still.

Even German soldiers, victorious and advancing, must eventually be tempted by the insidious invitation of that last thought. I had pictured actual warfare as enthusiasm, glory, heroism, exaltation, what one wills, but not as this irresistible craving for rest. The very word wakes in one a sort of wonder, and one has learnt to comprise therein the first childish idea of heaven—a splendid, golden sleep.

*Later.*—Last night we visited at sunset such a scene of horror as can never, and should never, be described. A train from Bucarest—the last to start—overladen with

overweary destitution, paralysed already at the start with poverty, ignorance and fear—from which description one can surmise that there were in it many women—collided and derailed. Perhaps the despair which is born of hopeless flight communicated itself to an otherwise soulless machine—who knows?—the fact remains that it hurled itself most thoroughly to perdition. No one knows how many hundreds died there by the roadside, some in the flames of the engine's exploded petrol tank, the greater number crushed into one huge formless mass of flesh and horse-hair, splintered bones and wood. The train had started from the capital three whole days before. Family groups clustered on the roofs of carriages whose framework swelled to bursting from the crowded turmoil within. Many died prematurely from exposure, and the few survivors from the final tragedy told nightmare stories of children's corpses brushed past the carriage windows when the train swept under bridges whose height no one had had the thought to measure mentally before they braved the roof. Such cruelty of negligence is inconceivable—and yet the proof that it was real was brought home to

us who turned the wreckage with averted faces, by the obvious indifference of the stunned survivors as to whether they were pronounced to be unhurt, crippled or dying. Mute misery of pain—we have learnt yet one more lesson. The scene last night was just a concentrated battle-field which lacked the royalty of cannon and individual heroism to make of an open-air slaughterhouse a splendid place to die.

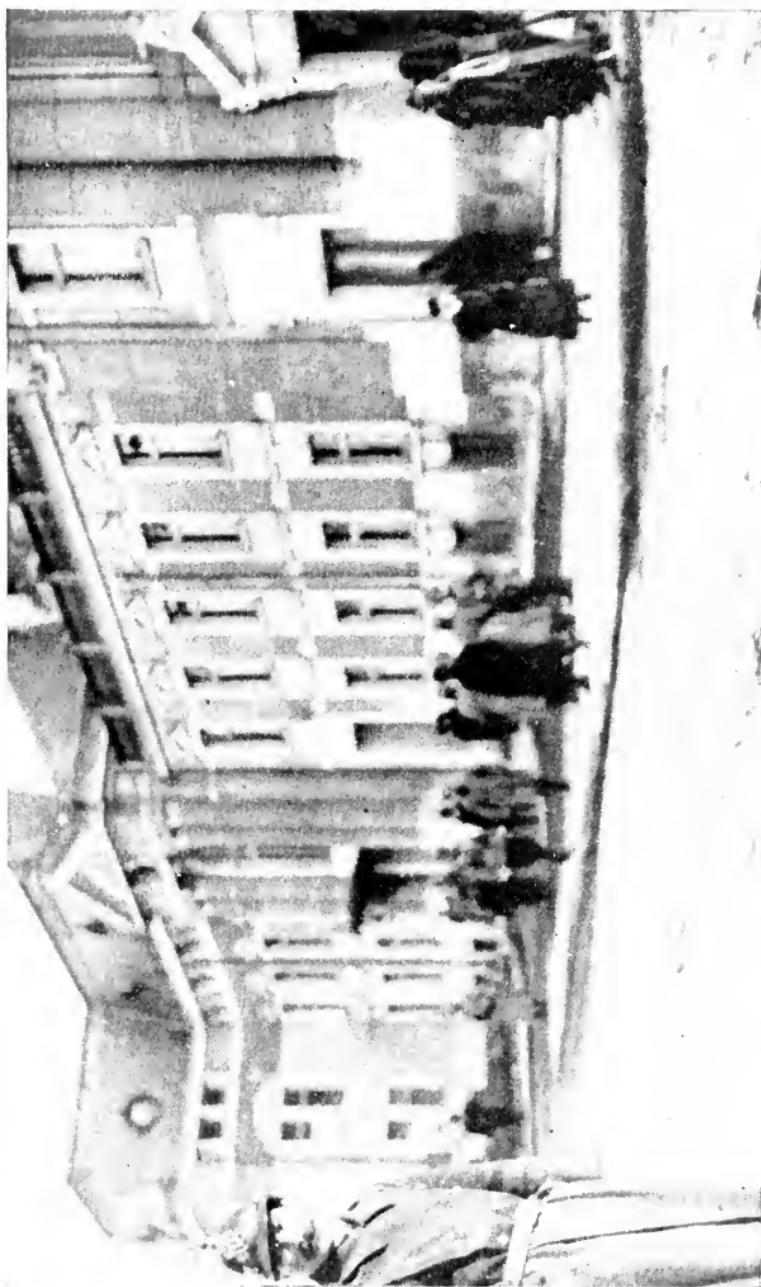
There was nothing to be done except to collect children who had lost their mothers and their dolls, and this we did to double the extent of all available accommodation. Russian soldiers remained behind with carts of quicklime to bury in a common grave the débris of machine and lives.

I woke this morning to find a message from the station-master informing me that a whole goods train of Red Cross stores from England had arrived during the night, and would any one responsible come to the station and fetch them? There is no one responsible, consequently we have all become so! I do not even know whether the things are the ones we ordered from England weeks ago, or whether they form part of the enormous

quantities of Government supplies expected all through last summer.

For the last three or four nights I have had four vague Englishmen sleeping on sofas and tables, and their presence has been, to say the least of it, inconvenient; but to-day they have made themselves very useful. We all went to the station *en bande*, and stood from 9 a.m. till 6 in mud up to our knees trying to get the goods off their Russian trucks. Here all alike have proved incapable of producing carts or motors. I have seen hundreds bumping about—military lorries amongst them—carrying officers' pianos and baggage station-wards, all private property destined to be expedited, together with their wives and families, to Russia. The fact remains, however, that we were flatly refused motors, and one can only blame the state of chaos that reigns in every organising department. Finally, and in despair, I approached a responsible official and demanded some form of transport for the stores, however, primitive.

The Queen's private motor-lorry was suggested and almost materialised, but at the last moment was discovered to have gone off into



ARRIVAL AT JASSY



the country to fetch fodder for the Palace cows. Self-control completely deserted me, and I told the important personage who was my last hope that I had seen his military motors carrying luggage belonging to officers' wives to the station whilst his soldiers died. Rhetoric prevailed where personal energy had availed less than nothing, and my whole party climbed into pony carts which appeared from nowhere. We bumped off, perched on the top of them, in the direction vaguely indicated as a dépôt for hospital stores provided by the Queen. Arrived there, we found it occupied by a Jew and his whole prolific family, who looked exceedingly comfortable. We went to the Chief of Police and to the Palace, we got an A.D.C. and some sergeants *de ville*, and persuaded them to evacuate that Jew and all his belongings. Having seen the good work well started, we returned to the station and walked three-quarters of a mile down the line of rails to find the convoy. Trains were pulling in and out in all directions without rhyme or reason, often they would find themselves face to face and resign themselves to a deadlock of stoppage. Whistles screamed in disproportion to

the aimless traffic, and both sides of the line were marked with an indescribable confusion of gaily painted personal luggage, refugees and stores of ammunition. The only facts we really and actively noticed were the rain and the filth. We enlisted a squad of Russian soldiers who looked as if they needed occupation, and they helped us willingly and with deep respect. I have never understood until to-day the amount that hands can accomplish. We had to do everything ourselves, and actually succeeded in starting a few loaded carts off towards the dépôt at sunset. The drivers had previously announced that they definitely refused to do more than one journey to-night, but we got hold of the police again before they went home, and threatened to search them out and imprison them next day if they did not turn up at the station by sunrise.

The irritating part about this whole unspeakable confusion is that no one can be blamed because no individual is responsible. But I must say that we would all feel much better to-night if we could vent our simmering rage on somebody. Everybody is tired, and this house is not a place to rest in; doors

open and shut, and people stumble in without knocking and take off their boots before they start to talk. We have given up trying to sweep mud off the floors.

*Later.*—Investigation has elicited the fact that the Red Cross stores which we so calmly appropriated are, in very truth, our own property. So now we can sit down with a clear conscience, and make of the contents of the cases and the stray English doctors and nurses who turn up at intervals an efficient and well-organised unit for the front. Insuperable difficulties spring up at every step of the road towards accomplishment; not the least of these was the absolute and desperate lack of any form of bed-linen. I have bought up all the peasant-women's winter scarves of wool, which rival any coat immortalised by Joseph, and these are destined for blankets. Jassy and its environs are deep in snow, and the cold at the front must be dreadful. Our own quarters are surprisingly warm, and for this we are devoutly thankful, because Roumanian stoves, which look more like organs than anything else, are designed more to suit Balkan schemes of decoration than solid British aspirations towards comfort and

warmth. They have big organ pipes which reach to the ceiling, round which the hot air curls, and they achieve every known shape and colour. They are by no means ugly, but one feels that one owns a lot of family tombs, and contemplation of their outlines does not make for cheer. The few rooms which our house boasts are enormous, and all have pale parquet floors where one slides about on imitation Aubusson carpets.

As far as any news is concerned, we hear only the fantastic stories told by arriving refugees. And most of them are disinclined to talk of anything but their own immediate physical discomfort and fright. The only thing that we definitely know is that the Germans are in Bucarest, and that knowledge, when one takes a look at the map, is enough to be depressing. One thing is satisfactory, and that is that there is no longer any possibility of further influx into this town. All that can happen now is for it to empty again slowly. Train-loads leave daily for Russia, and we have got to the stage where we do not much mind whether they no longer arrive so long as they steam away from Jassy.

There is a good deal of friction between the Roumanian and the Russian "Tommies," and this is unavoidable, for a strange army seldom receives a whole-hearted welcome. Russians are so big, and the one thing that is obviously tactless at present is to take up even the smallest amount of space. I never realised a *million* in visible numbers before. Were the units which go to make it here bottles of anæsthetic, or blankets, or loaves of bread, or something useful, one would be able to admire, but one actively resents a surplus when it consists of people.

In a funny way, however, we have settled down to being permanently unsettled, and it is a daily surprise to find how comfortably one can manage to exist without anything at all. The banks have opened, because the bullion from Bucarest got through; it would be interesting to know how that was managed, but there is no one to tell us. We take it for granted that we are being governed and fought for, because there is nothing to prove definitely that this is not the case. Still, this condition cannot be permanent, and it is obvious that some effort will have to be made either to organise a settled resting-place, or

a second flight to a spot so distant that confusion can turn to order by a process of natural evolution.

*Later.*—I skipped Xmas Day; it was too horrible. Not a flower, not a gift, not a change of any description from the day before or the day that followed. We worked hard in the morning classifying assets and packing cases in a dark cellar; the unit is taking shape, and arrangements have even been made for it to start for the front next week. Visitors and officers rushed in and out all day, and the Englishmen amongst them whispered, “Plum pudding.” I had some raisins in a tin, and the cook made a mixture with maize and suet and dried grapes which we all shared solemnly at dinner “for auld lang syne.” Then I went to bed and cried myself to sleep.

I had not thought that we could possibly enter into a new phase of horror, but it was born on Boxing Day, when the first whispers reached us of the destruction of the oil-fields. Frankly, we had, each and every one of us, completely forgotten the oil! A man, a friend of ours, drove up in a motor, streaked with grime, weary and dead to the world.

After lunch he started to tell his story, fortified by a big cigar.

He had been one of a party who went out alone to the petrol city to destroy. No one would give them help, and he told us wonderful accounts of the scenes which he had witnessed. The first step had been to capture every single man and boy who knew anything about the petrol plants and deport them bodily to Moldavia, so that the Germans should find no skilled workmen to brutalise to their own profit. And then a few pairs of hands sufficed to crumble and lay in ashes what many hundred brains had worked to build. First they broke up all the machinery —the how of the happening is immaterial; the most primitive and brutal weapons served them best. Then they poured benzine from the roofs of factories down their walls and set them alight, they dug trenches round the vats and started blazing channels of flame towards the reservoirs. These blew up each in turn, and soot and fumes made of what had been sunlight an eternal night where the Fire King went mad. Town by town saw the destroyers come to let hell loose, and factory after factory writhed in a death agony of

twisted iron to send jets of poison fumes after the four small flying motor-cars. The devastation left by a retreating army lay before them, turmoil of an enemy drunk with success stirred in the wind-gusts that fed the flames from the south. Twice did the destroyers miscalculate the time at their disposal, and they were badly hurried in one place. The enemy arrived sooner than was expected, and there was no time to dig the trenches—just one little match sufficed to start a burning inundation from unskilfully burst vats. Some one shouted, “*Run!*” just before the explosions began.

The man who told us the story ended each sentence with the words: “It was the fact that it was daylight—and nevertheless dark, which made everything so much worse.”

One can hardly credit the fact that those few little men have so effectually accomplished what they set out to do that it will be six months before the Germans can squeeze a drop of petrol from the saturated earth, and yet that is what they affirm so quietly that one can but accept the statement—and be grateful. We are told to-day that a German wireless message has been intercepted

from Berlin which sends the conquerors orders to send at once to Germany all the petrol that they can manage to expedite. And this has reconciled us to the despair which imagination taught us to catch in the evening breeze to-night when we motored back a little way with the teller of the story along the road that he had travelled.

It is part of the general contradiction of things that this destruction of the oil-fields, which is the most important happening of our corner of the war, should remain the one which has, locally, at least, made the smallest stir.

*Later.*—We have suddenly realised to-day that we have got back to the frame of mind in which we spent our last weeks in Bucarest. And this is discouraging. In other words, we are back in a sort of *cul-de-sac* which has, nevertheless, one small outlet, wofully inadequate, in the shape of that blessed single line to Russia. According to all the various contradictory information we get, the Germans are not going to sit still and are moving forward rapidly.

The only defence that lies between us and them is the famous Sereth line, which the

Roumanians and Russians alike believe to be impregnable. But one cannot tell if it is going to hold until it has been tested—and if it is tested and gives way—why, they will be here. That's all!!

The slightest thing that looks like a plan hangs fire. One cannot even settle a hospital. A Roumanian one which went to the front at Roman a short while ago has been recalled to Jassy, as the line is too thin on that spot and there is no point in risking one of the few working units we have got. The authorities tell us nothing except that "the situation is very serious," and that much, we flatter ourselves without conceit, we are quite competent to understand for ourselves. Galatz has been evacuated, but that in itself means little, except that they expect a bombardment there; but if the line is so thin at Roman, there is no reason why it should not melt away altogether, and then it will be a question of another little run wouldn't do us any harm. The thing that seems fantastic is that it should be taken as such a matter of course that "the line should be thin" anywhere. The Russians are here, there and everywhere in thousands, and all the German prisoners

we have seen are old men and babies, worn out, wretched, ill-clad, and worse fed. Such tired troops could be held, turned round and chased by anything.

One likes to feel that there is a solid and settled base between oneself and an advancing enemy. At present we in Jassy form the base, and it is altogether too close for comfort.

Things have looked brighter for the last three or four days, because we have been able to get some butter from a family that was anxious to exchange for sugar. Sugar we obtained from some Roumanian women who wanted soap. So my last boxes of English soap have vanished, but we have all got to the stage where we prefer to be dirty than start the day without some pretence at a breakfast. We have learnt many lessons out here, but first and foremost amongst them stands the one that one can stand anything if one's body is comfortable, even sorrow born from humiliation of the soul.

## CHAPTER IX

*January 1917.*—Letters from England arrived on New Year's Day, and have done much towards restoring us to a normal state of British phlegm. I must honestly confess that these letters, written just at the moment of our worst plight when we were flying from Bucarest with all known things unpleasant, and all things unknown subject for serious dread, seem to show an apparent indifference to our possible sufferings which has brought acute annoyance to us. I think that one amongst fifteen newspapers mentioned Roumania—just that and no more. It made us all rather angry at first to realise that we must appear so utterly unimportant, but afterwards we lost ourselves to all actuality in reading the stories of fighting in France. People at home are “in a war.” Here we can only produce a sanguinary *mélée*.

The situation grows daily more complicated and there is every element of trouble.

There is some friction between the Roumanians and the Russians on every possible point, from fighting policy to military etiquette. The last question, which has bubbled over, is the one as to which of the two nationalities are to run the hospitals, the few there are. The Russians say that, as they have taken over the whole of the front lines and allowed the Roumanian army to retire for a well-earned spell of rest, there will be no Roumanian wounded, and they want all the hospitals emptied of their Roumanian staffs and turned over, together with all available supplies, to the Russian Red Cross. The Roumanians, one and all, are naturally wild at the idea and definitely decline to comply. So either they must be forcibly commandeered or stand empty all winter. It is a complete deadlock, and one can only hope that feelings of humanity will bring them to a compromise.

Meanwhile we have even been allowed to receive reliable news from Bucarest. The German administration is apparently allowing individuals to leave for Jassy without the formality of a passport. This is such a surprising fact that we credit them with all sorts of evil and mysterious motives for what is

probably only an oversight soon to be rectified. The fact remains that a Roumanian officer arrived in Jassy to-day after spending three days in Bucarest wearing mufti quite unmolested. Apparently he just got on his bicycle when he was bored and rode away from the town!

He tells us that the new king is proclaimed and that all is quiet and well ordered. A small army of pro-Germans—we have known them well by name and sight for over a year—met the German General Staff at the gates of the city, and tendered bouquets. It is hard not to be instantly furnished with an obvious adjective, but it is only fair to insist upon the fact that individuals who hold systematically to one idea and to one party cannot be termed traitors for the simple reason that that party may not be one's own. The bearer of these tidings travelled on his bicycle all the way to Jassy. His descriptions of scenes on the road are terrible. So many people who left Bucarest on foot during the exodus have not yet begun to arrive here, and, according to what he told us, few of them ever will. He rode through the devastation of the petrol cities, and spoilt the quietening infor-

mation that few casualties had resulted there from the wholesale destruction by adding: "But all the poor, poor people have in their eyes the look that lingers from a murdered soul." He drew for us one word-picture of a little country cart, where a starving donkey tried to cry his need for succour and pleaded mutely to be released from the burden of two dead women and three children which he continued to drag quite slowly because he had been "gee'd up" some while before, and had not been given leave to rest before they died. After that we begged to hear no further stories of the road.

It is possible that the end of this country, as far as the Allies are concerned, is very near, and we are no longer terrified, only horribly depressed.

As to the things that have happened with our own English Red Cross unit, they parry description and one can only sit and laugh. Insuperable difficulty after insuperable difficulty rose with the relentless climb of sand-hills towards snow mountains. A compatriot wants to go home. I cannot say that I blame him, but I am extraordinarily sorry for him if he tries, because he will not have a nice

time getting there. I only ask one thing of life now—and that not to be obliged to leave Jassy and travel along the only route that remains until the war is over or things have settled down.

*Later.*—A Grand Duchess has been to Jassy, and has done much, by her charming personality and her sympathy, to bring harmony into Russo-Roumanian relations. The storm-clouds were so very easily dispelled that one begins to think that one had exaggerated the racial differences. In fact, she was received with almost more enthusiasm by the Roumanian populace than by her own troops.

Less important people like ourselves were given practical proof of her presence by the complete stoppage of all our little luxuries, such as firewood and dairy produce. Last night for dinner we had soup tablets, boiled potatoes and black bread, and there was nothing in the house to-day but white beans. At this instant, however, we have had untold luck, because a friend asked us for a little tea. We sent it, and she returned a grateful effusion and a pot of jam. I gave an old lady who lives opposite some cakes of Pears' soap,

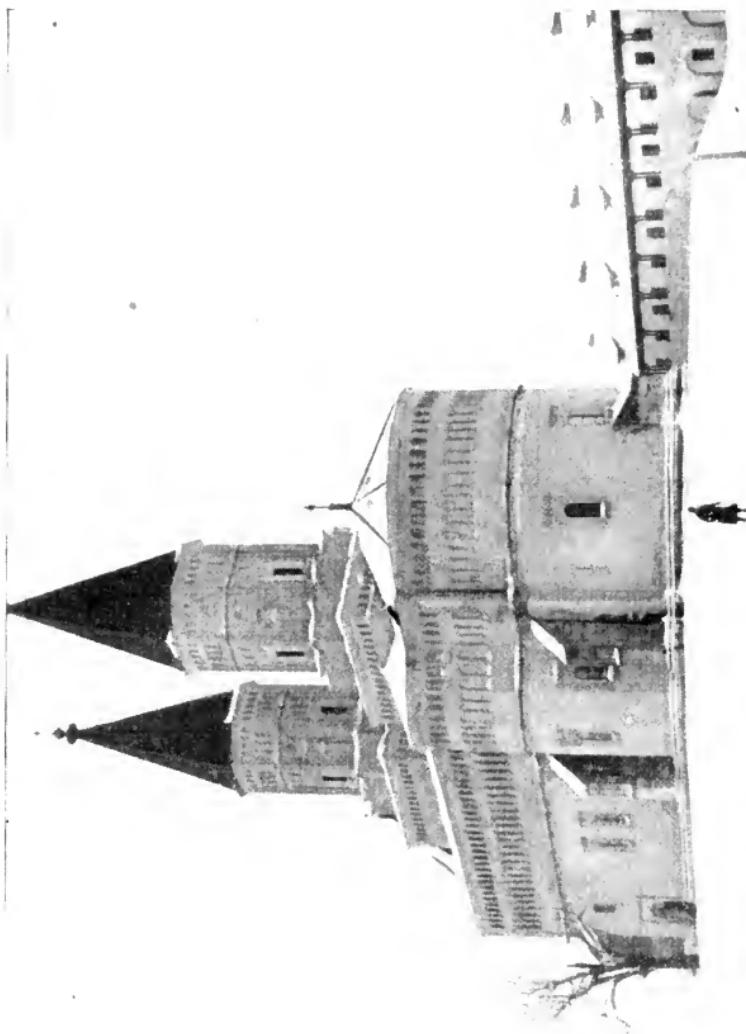
some aspirine and some pyramidon, which things came in the last letter post from home, and she returned butter and a plate of ham. Ten minutes ago our British soldier visitors drove in from a reconnaissance, and unloaded a huge dried fish from the Danube and a whole uncooked ham brought from the Russian frontier. They themselves had eaten nothing for thirty hours, and we are all going to sit down at six o'clock and give ourselves up to greed.

They also had stories to tell which have thrown those of the Roumanian officer into gloomy shade. In the train which brought them to the frontier a soldier had died of cholera and lain two days side by side with living fellow-travellers. It was nobody's business to remove the corpse, and so it was left to lie and jolt with the train. Carts are so firmly stuck into the motoring roads that the way is blocked, and the only means of passing is to overturn the mass and burn the wreckage. Two feet of snow cover the whole brown earth and make a shroud for victims of exposure. Both men arrived drowned in water, unrecognisable from mud.

People have begun to speak quite openly of

the evacuation of Jassy. But this time the flight would be organised by Russians, as it would be into Russia that we would have to go. Rostoff, on the Sea of Azoff, is mentioned as our final haven—and really we might do worse. It is quite a nice place. I remember it vaguely as a big place with long untidy buildings and a broad waterway somewhere near. The surroundings have only left me with the impression that it was one of the few “not quite flat” places that I saw in Russia. At least we should be certain of getting food there—good food; what’s more, caviare galore! and we should be within sighting distance of the Further East, which I love. I have been advised to prepare my heavy boxes into light ones, if I have any. I am saying that I haven’t—I really cannot subdivide again! A sort of “specialist evacuator” has been sent here in the shape of a general who has done it before—in Russia. So we shall be done slowly this time and systematically, and perhaps the results will be better. Besides, even the individual learns by force of habit, and I am collecting a big suitcase full of food, for Azoff sounds very far away to me.

SUPERANOVA, DESIGN FOR MOTOR AMBULANCES





Our latest disturbance is that the owner of our house has become restive and is trying to turn us out of it. He says that his wife is dying from grief at our having it, but I refuse to accept the nasty imputation that we are doing it any permanent injury. Besides, it would take a very long time to dislodge all the various sorts and classes of people who have made of it a permanent private hotel. They are all solid and British, and it will take physical force to move us—a great deal of it. We really are full up now. One man spent the night on the kitchen stove, which is made of mud and flat bricks. He was late in getting to bed, because he was worried lest the fire should not be quite out. Sheets gave out three days ago, and we all lie in strange relics of night attire covered to the necks with coloured cotton cloths in which peasants were wont to carry home market produce. They are quite warming, really, considering the gossamer of which they are made. We laugh all the time, despite the tragedy on every side. But it is sympathetic laughter, first cousin to real tears.

*Later.*—We have been living a wilder rush than usual, because all the officers who come

and spend a night or two here at alternate intervals, having gone off definitely in different directions for a "long time," chose last night in which to turn up, all together, from various points of the compass. I had had no idea of what a lot of people had really slept in this house at intervals until I saw them like that all together, and remembered that there was literally less than nothing in the kitchen. They all wanted baths; it was obvious that each one needed it worse than the last, and our most triumphant effort up to the present has been three baths in twenty-four hours. They wanted soap—and medicine—and towels—and, somehow, they all got them and were so nice and grateful. Each one produced a different sort of odd contribution to the communal commissariat, and then, after dinner, one of them played music-hall songs, and we all felt quite extraordinarily homesick.

This morning another post arrived from England and brought countless small packages of tinned food. It came just in time. We had had no butter for a week and there was hardly any sugar left. Not that any came, but we unpacked some jam and remem-

bered the pleasant taste of sweetened things. To-night we are going to broach a bottle of champagne—one of the original three remains. A woman—just an ordinary woman—is a very useful thing to have about! I have learnt how to mend socks and to make wooden buttons, and to pull out the fluff of the selvage from stuffs and call it cotton. All kinds of people who don't "belong" to us at all leave their clothes and their bags in the front hall, and every bracket is used for drying linen. It's the funniest-looking house I ever pictured, even when I was a child and built them under the nursery table. Everybody leaves messages for everybody else with whoever happens to be there. I have learnt to keep a little book with: "Tell So-and-so to communicate with General Staff regarding the horse-power of such and such a car." "Tell — his room is No. 15 at the Continental Hotel when he arrives to-morrow." "Here's a key for So-and-so—he'll know what it is—and see that he gets this sword and returns mine to you." "When a Russian officer comes to see me, say this and that and the following."

To-day at 9 a.m. we delivered bandages to

the British unit, which still survives despite vicissitudes; at 9.30 a new stock of supplies had got to be packed and prepared for the returning Roman unit; at eleven an agent turned up from Russia to take large orders for linen for the hospitals; at 12.30 we lunched; at two a party of French doctors came to find out whether we could give them any spare surgical instruments; at 2.30 there was a general meeting of the Russian Red Cross. At three we all went to the station to make sure that the arrangements were all in order for the arrival of the Roumanian hospital unit from Roman; at four we superintended the delivery of a gift of British stores to the working Roumanian hospital which has been lately born at the doors of our own dépôt; at five we had a farewell tea-party to some half-dozen British officers going to Bacau; at six I interviewed three stranded English governesses who needed clothes and money and information about the Russian journey. At 7.30 we dined. And this was only an average day. I have not even mentioned the round dozen or so of stray people who wandered in between whiles asking for things and making suggestions, bang-

ing doors, and talking every language under the sun!! One thing never happens here, and that is to be bored.

*Later.*—Not the wildest flights of imagination can picture the things that can happen in a country when force of circumstances demoralises the bulk of the population and there has not yet been time for the figure-heads to find their feet. It is so hard to tabulate them without seeming to throw blame on just those people who have really earned our undying respect because they are most loyally trying to do their best. After all, if London had to entrain for Norwich at twenty-four hours' notice, I cannot conceive that the transfer would be a tidy one!!!

Nevertheless, the stories told by our own officers and by Russian officials who incessantly pass through this house are quite fantastic. The "skilled evacuator," otherwise a newly arrived Russian general, waited eight hours for his train at the frontier, which used to be at a bare two hours' train journey from Jassy. It subsequently took five, when started, to cover the distance. At the station, but outside it, where the train finally came to a complete standstill, they

waited another ninety minutes, and then walked, together with the crowd of six hundred less important travellers, along a free line to the empty Jassy platform. It was not even worth while inquiring as to the wherefore of the stoppage, because no answer could have been given. The station-master, as a matter of fact, volunteered that he had not known that there were any passengers in that train! Apparently forty cars of explosives are resting in Jassy station—enough to destroy half the town if they blew up sideways. I don't know enough about explosives to understand whether this is possible, and the uncertainty is rather worrying when one sees hundreds of unemployed lounging there, incessantly smoking cigarettes. Another Russian officer told me that he had passed, between Jassy and Bacau, a train-load of warm clothes heading towards the front. The soldiers in charge were sitting in a dejected row along the embankment chewing roots of beetroots which they had found piled there in a field. From the look of the ground my informant gathered that the party had been there a considerable time, and took the trouble to stop his own train and

inquire why there was no engine at either end of the other, or, for that matter, in sight. "We have slept here for ten days," replied one of the soldiers vaguely—the rest did not even trouble to listen—"and we have had no food since one hundred hours." He added that, presumably, they had been forgotten, and that one or two of the party had died.

One of our own officers arrived from Galatz on a train which brought wounded to be cared for. They had no food for forty-eight hours, and many died. At Berlade he had ventured away to forage for supplies and actually unearthed some tinned nourishment, with which he returned in triumph to the train only to find that it had steamed off, five minutes before, backwards along the road to Galatz which he had just travelled.

My doctor arrived from Roman, distant an hour's normal train journey. It took him twelve, hanging on to an engine together with fifty other men. Some dropped off quite quietly into the snow-drifts when they grew tired. On every skyline, he added, and in every valley, they saw horses with broken legs, left to die, turning and turning in endless circles of pain, and he heard them

screaming despite the uproar of machinery which drowned most hearing.

In our English hospital there is a man who has had his foot amputated. He lay pinned under a burning car. A hatchet was brought by a doctor to a French officer standing near, and the doctor said: "Do it if you can; I have no instruments and feel paralysed." The Frenchman did the thing in the whole horror of the sunlight, whilst the Russian privates who were his charge took advantage of the opportunity and pillaged private passenger luggage on the train. It did not strike them as unworthy; one must remember that there are whole people in the world who have never been taught that there is, in theft, dishonour.

All this time no attempt whatsoever has been made to clear away from off the main railway line to Bucarest the wreckage of the terrible train accident which happened there in days which have faded into the darkest ages. But yesterday the idea occurred to a party of our British officers to clear it in passing, and so they went to the authorities and said: "Give us men and engine chains, and we will do the rest." These were easily

procured—human material here is cheap, only forethought stands at a premium—and the squad set off in the middle of the night. At two o'clock to-day we remembered that they had no food, and so I started off after them in my motor laden with tea and a few pork-chops and bread. How we reached them, I don't know. The going would have been better had the road frankly abandoned any effort to live up to its pretensions. But when we finally arrived, not only did we see a cleared track stretching away into the distance, but a whole set of new lines was already half laid over the ruined gap. Happenings like this prove how temptingly easy would be the restoration of order into the chaos in which we live, which at present seems to grow from day to day, just because human nature meets failure with easy resignation and requires a pointing finger to indicate endurance, which in warfare stands for the sublime.

*Later.*—I think that it can be definitely assumed now that all danger of our being obliged to leave Jassy in the immediate future is over. Russians and Roumanians alike are standing on the Sereth, and the Ger-

mans do not seem to be particularly anxious to cross. A little success does much to restore balance, and we have already voiced the somewhat ambitious dream of seeing the enemy driven back in the spring. I ask for only one reward for all that we are going through, and that to drive down behind them in my motor! It would be worth anything to go back like that—into our own house.

Quietly, slowly, nevertheless perceptibly, a good deal is being done here to restore order. A better feeling has been established between the Roumanians and the Russians, and all have, at last, realised that they have a common enemy and that the personal equation must go to the wall. There is splendid stuff in both races, but both require more time than is conceivable to accomplish anything at all. Now, for the first time since war's outbreak, we have time to breathe in our little corner of the world.

But disease is coming, and that was a horror which we had forgotten. There is a terrible shortage of wood, and, in the absence of all other material, fire is the only reliable disinfectant. Lice overrun the hospitals and we are unable to combat them, for we have no

serums and no disinfectants. Petrol, which might serve our purpose at a pinch, is also lacking now. The doctors are reduced to vinegar. I personally still have a small supply of regulation stuff left over from amongst the things that came out from home, and I have hidden it in case of emergency. The state of affairs could not declare itself as dangerous until the spring, and in two months much could be done to combat it. The work has been begun, in the only possible way, by ordering supplies from home in stupendous quantities. But we are met by the same old uncertainty as to whether they can ever arrive.

The need will most certainly be very urgent, according to the stories we hear already. A Roumanian nurse came to me straight from the firing line at Tekutch and said: "Can you tell me where to go for help? The living where I come from refuse to bury the dead for fear of contagion, and the dogs are eating the bodies. I've seen a room where forty men die of typhus and scarlet fever together, and no one will go near them. The day I left, I managed to get a Roumanian

officer to bring some straw and I spread it near them with my own hands."

She did not exaggerate. My friend the surgeon tells we that we are in for a terrible time if something is not done at once. And the head of the bacteriological hospital has submitted the following: "If one quarter of the new army is not at once sent out of the country into cleanliness, that army will be gone before the autumn."

Our own hospital already has over three hundred infectious cases, all different diseases. Yet we cannot refuse to take in dying men. Our nurses are being simply splendid. I refer to the original party that came out with the first hospital unit from home. All this time they have not had so much as a chair to sit in, or a sofa, only a bed apiece and a Red Cross case for a table. And they never told. One of them has recently come back from Roman, where she worked with the Roumanian hospital. She brought a photo of the morgue, where seventy dead bodies had lain for a fortnight, unattended. She counted over fifty disabled engines stranded on the line between Roman and Jassy; it is impossible to mend them, because they were orig-

inally German. The wounded, who are sent down in parties of twenty and thirty to be attended to here, are forced to wait for days at every siding, to leave the road clear for train-loads of petrol-plant machinery needed urgently at Bacau. They arrive dazed and nearly dying, and go to sleep in our hospital and don't wake up for two days sometimes. One man to whom I gave a whole loaf of bread hugged it to his chest as a precious thing. That fact he could still recognise, but he seemed to have forgotten how to eat. A great many of our cases are typhoid, and we have little or no milk to give, so they just die.

The suffering which is endured so uncomplainingly seems so utterly out of proportion to what these splendid fellows have deserved. I said to one the other day, a man who had lost two legs and an arm and only kept his reason by a miracle: "What Roumania needs is just one victory to give you courage"; and he answered me very low: "What my country needs, madame, is quicklime in quantities, so as to bury her dead decently and clean."

## CHAPTER X

*February 1917.*—The house has been really quiet for ten days—all our visitors are away, most of them at the front. And for this we have cause to be devoutly thankful, as the food shortage has become acute and we are told that, unless the railways tumble into working order within the very near future, starvation is certain. Nowadays we only get meat, in very small quantities, twice a week, officially distributed by the Government. Apart from that, we eat bread and the few little luxuries which come to us as a sign of Heaven's special favour every now and then. The small quantities of milk, butter and eggs available are naturally reserved for the hospitals. The situation is undoubtedly very serious. We are still plunged in mid-winter, with feet of snow on the ground, and all are suffering from a very virulent form of influenza ushered in with incredible temperatures.

German propaganda is making itself felt in the town, and their spies abound. Some Roumanian military prisoners were recently liberated, and returned to their base furnished with illuminated leaflets advertising German supremacy and Roumania's ruin. These were, however, loyally handed over to their officers.

The deaths from starvation amongst the peasant population of the country are terrible. Men crawl in to the outskirts of Jassy, having staggered for twenty or thirty miles in the hope of dragging themselves home again with a little food for their babies.

Travelling conditions are indescribable. One of our newspaper correspondents had to get to the front. He started off in a motor with one friend, with a second motor following—nowadays one never tries to reach anything in one. The cars had orders not to lose sight of each other, but a blizzard came between them. The front one was snowed up at midnight, and the two men gave themselves up for lost, as they had eaten all their food and drunk the brandy. But, fortunately, a regiment of Cossacks passed and lent them horses. They foraged about in the snow for

two hours and then had the luck to find the other motor. They restarted and reached a village outside their destination, where their engine froze. Undaunted, they commandeered six oxen and hitched them to a sled, in which conveyance they finally rolled triumphantly into Bacau, after having spent sixteen hours in covering the remaining eight miles. These are the conditions under which we have to keep the few hospitals running near the front lines supplied with everything which we have not, as a preliminary difficulty, got!!!!

Now we have been told that, as soon as the weather grows warm again, we shall have air raids. One came to Berlade last week, and the French brought down two machines, one with anti-aircraft guns and the other with one of their own aeroplanes. Here we have no defences at all, and these houses of packed humanity will crumble into a bloody pool at the base of the hills. They have neither cellar nor second storey, so one will have no choice of action, except to stand still in whatever place one may happen to be and trust to luck.

These are the little reflections which are



A VILLAGE CHAPEL



born during moments of rest and quiet contemplation of the situation. But they come seldom. Apart from them so much is visibly being done to restore a semblance of order that we have become quite cheerful. There is a whisper of spring in the air, though it is still very cold, and we have begun to work in the garden. Hitherto we had not had time to appreciate its possibilities. After all, we have been in Jassy barely two months, and, although it is easy to paint a picture of indescribable confusion, it is, in another way, marvellous to realise how comparatively comfortable we have managed to settle down. By this time most of our friends are installed with some pretence at permanency, and a half-hearted attempt at sociability is beginning to make itself felt. They are amusing to the point of pathos, these little lunches and dinners where we scrape the inadequate coverings of the plates set before us, and converse volubly and in an interminable circle about our own unimportant little affairs. There is danger of becoming entirely self-centred and of boiling everything down to the personal equation, because we get no books

and hardly any papers, and the few mails that reach us from Russia are ages old.

Clothes have become a serious consideration. I have often, in the past, spoken of my belongings as "worn out," but I never knew before how odd things could look when they are in actual fact worn through. Things like powder and nail-cleaners are myths only. For the former I use ground rice and for the latter hairpins, and I see myself, in the near future, reduced to wearing soldiers' military boots. It has been brought home to us women how utterly absurd is fashion. The pretty ones look the lovelier for the fact that they can manage to look nice at all, but all these attributes fade to nothing before the quality of usefulness.

*Later.*—The military lull has brought opportunities for airing political squabbles dormant in all small countries. Something is in the air, and it has affected, curiously enough, chiefly the Russian soldiers. They appear restive, and talk in groups with an excitement disproportionate to the quiet of this interval. We hear the most fantastic rumours, but have learnt, from bitter experience, to discredit anything that savours of

*on dit.* Nothing can be very seriously wrong, because order has come to the railways and the danger of starvation has been reduced to minimum. Most of our supplies come from Odessa nowadays, and our staple diet is based on the big pale pink Russian hams which we used to consider so delicious in far-off Bucarest days. Now we view the insipid contours with acute loathing and merely eat to live.

Now that the trains are running slowly but regularly, we have received some Red Cross stores and consignments of disinfectant. The first step was to purge the hospitals, and this has been most thoroughly accomplished. Some of the buildings had to be burnt; it was the only way to exterminate the lice. Most of the minor diseases have been appreciably checked, and cholera and typhus are our worst enemies. There is still time to accomplish a good deal before the summer, but the danger will not be over, for I believe that typhus lies dormant in hot weather and wakes to life when winter comes.

Our papers make rather depressing reading. We realise that we cannot hope to hold the world-stage—but still, the limelight of the

times avoids our little corner most conspicuously, and it is rather irritating. One does not mind labelling one's own self as the least of little things, but one hates having the fact rubbed in by being completely ignored.

*March 1917.*—The Russian *coup d'état* has come and the Government here is having some anxious moments. It is unlikely, however, that anything serious will transpire. The Royal Family is very popular and is faithfully served by the administration. All Russians, of course, are in a ferment, but it is reassuring to notice that they have not lost sight of the common ideals of the war.

Telegraphic news from America is palpitating, and brings the end of the war within sight, at any rate, of our own generation. Unfortunately everything worth doing takes an immense amount of time in this world, and one cannot hope for things to begin to happen for a long time. It is rather discouraging that the crisis in Russia should have come to a head at this moment, speaking, naturally, from our own point of view, which is the only one that appears, through force of circumstances, important. The Roumanians and Russians were just learning to

stand up to their three-legged race, and now all the knots have had to be loosened to give the latter a chance to stretch cramped knees. We had begun to talk of a big spring offensive, and now the only thing that is obvious is that waiting will be our indefinite lot.

Our biggest social function lately has been a triple funeral of society victims to typhus. The toll amongst the French doctors is heavy, and there are deaths every day. I went yesterday to inspect a new barrack at the station which has been recently built to replace our hospital, which was one of the many to be burnt so as to attain purification. I had never seen lice close by before, and was surprised to find them so small. The horror of the word had made me think they were big things. All that I saw were dead, and the fact that they obtrude themselves upon my notice is sufficient proof of the quantity I saw. The new patients were lying, one hundred and fifty in number, on the ground near the building. They were waiting for a bath and a shave, and will lie there, some of them, for a day or two until they can be attended to. The head of the hospital is preparing a bathing train for them, but it will not be

ready for another ten days. The actual number of typhus cases is abating, but the disease—what there is of it—has taken a highly virulent form, and few of the tainted recover. People one knows go down with it every day, and whether one will succumb oneself is purely a matter of chance.

As I write, a little black lamb which was sold to us two days ago, and which has been put into the garden to fatten, has begun to “ma-a-a-a-a” most miserably. It’s fantastic how anything young that won’t stay alone because it’s bored can make life unpleasant to much bigger things around it! I never knew that lambs had intelligence, character and personality. This one just wants company, and its “ma-a-a-s” are in every tone till they reach an angry squeal, more like the voice of a child than anything animal I ever heard. I have had to have it taken away. It planted its forefeet against the wall of the house when it discovered my window above its head, and bleated up. I ask any one: Is that the universal idea of a lamb? The servants had put a pink ribbon round its neck, and are now completely staggered because I have just informed them that I, at any rate,

decline to eat it. We were adopted, about two months ago, by a wretched, sneaky-looking little cur, now a magnificent long-haired sheep-dog. He is a capital watchman, who lords himself all over the place and has a nasty, overbearing nature. A second small starved dog adopted us yesterday and was fed. Now it has betaken itself to the farthest corner of the property and is cringing in fear by the watch-dog, too hungry to leave and yet too frightened to move. It lies in the sun with one eye open, having had several serious bites, but remembers "good dinner" and won't go. I fear, however, that it will give up and crawl away and die.

*Later.*—The war situation has come to a complete standstill: it is hard to believe that anything more can ever happen here.

Seven hundred thousand Russians are said to be on our front, who could, undoubtedly, just sweep across the country, driving all before them, and lead us back into Bucarest. But their very numbers make them a difficult army to equip and feed. At present they lack munitions, fodder, guns and railways, so it all looks pretty hopeless, and one can but be thankful for them as a definite solid buffer

which will require a lot of moving. There are very few enemy divisions in front of them, and we are told that these consist principally of Turks and Bulgarians. It makes one rather ill to think how easy complete victory could be and how unlikely it is.

Social events in the shape of funerals follow one another with depressing rapidity. To-morrow six victims are to be buried at once. They comprise the best Roumanian typhus expert, the nurse who looked after the last French doctor to die, a sister of charity, a colonel and two young officers. Amidst these sunny, warm surroundings it is hard to realise death. I went to the station barrack again to-day. More than a fortnight had passed since my last visit, but the sick and wounded still lay in the open awaiting their turn. All the hospitals are overcrowded with sickness; there are few wounds, because there has been stagnation on all fronts. We have divorced one of the big English doctors from his regulation work for a month, and asked him to take responsible steps to combat disease. He has started by composing a train of oil-tanks for disinfecting clothes, and is completing the half-finished train for giving



A GROUP OF RED CROSS WORKERS



the soldiers baths and a shave. He tells me that, at present, nearly all the infected die simply for want of the necessary foodstuffs and serums. It will be the purest luck if none of us get it, because we have, naturally, no more efficacious safeguards than any one else. The little we did have was distributed centuries ago. Bordering as we do upon the East, we are subject to Eastern meteorology and have had no spring. The big thaw came quite suddenly, and hot dust winds from the south did much to dry the resulting quagmire. Whether the dust is preferable to mud remains to be seen: mud breeds disease and dust is a reliable carrier. With both following so close on one another's heels, we should do well!

What is so desperately depressing is this gradual fading away of an army which has had little or no fighting to make death worth while.

All through this time of waiting our thoughts turn sentimentally towards England with such *abandon* that we are deserving of ridicule. Newspapers reach us now, and they are not too old. I suppose that it is only we exiles who can properly appreciate the con-

tradiction of the entertainment column side by side with the one that records the toll of the trenches. I saw a fashion sheet the other day, and realised that there was still charm in clothes. And all the women in the picture papers look like angels paying a visit to the earth. One does hope that England will make an effort not to change too much before we see her again. This sounds selfish, but it is the truest expression of patriotism of which this particular little band of exiles is capable. We read in the papers that many women go on out to dine in day clothes after their work. To us this appears incredible—that there should be human beings in the world who have the chance to put on different clothes and who do not realise the wonderful blessing of being *able* to feel clean. We have forgotten what it was like. We have even forgotten what it felt like to eat food that tasted clean and had a flavour of anything at all. One welcomes the curious “tinny” taste of preserved stuffs simply because one knows that they were packed in pleasant surroundings and grew in healthy earth. All the things one frankly hated before taste good, like tomato soup tablets or tinned sardines.

Besides this we have macaroni and occasional snipe. These are very fishy in odour and taste, but quite remarkably delicious.

In the Roumanian typhus hospital, which we were invited to inspect a few days ago, they are allowed four bottles of milk per day for a hundred cases which can be nourished on nothing else. In the first ward men and women sleep together, separated by screens. Two officers had been very bad, but the hospital was proud of them and showed them off because they were recovering. Opposite them lay two *infirmières*; one was dead and the other dying. There they would lie until their turn came round for a funeral. Up to the present not an English person has gone down with a disease. We take a lot of care of ourselves—wash our teeth several times a day with brandy and rub our nostrils with the stuff—and we have the luck to be able to superintend our own cooking and washing. Now that the weather is fine, this kind of thing happens in the garden for the sake of safety, and it is funny to see damp strings of macaroni and the family under-clothes suspended from the same rope, stretched across the branches of pine trees

at whose roots bloom lilies-of-the-valley.

Curious how one grows accustomed to things. Conditions here are fundamentally unchanged since the first fortnight of our arrival, and one and all have come to consider them as perfectly natural.

Next month we are going to be lucky enough to be allowed to visit the Russian front. Nominally we shall be called "an inspection of the hospitals," but I fancy that the Russian and Roumanian authorities alike are rather proud of what they have done, and are anxious for outsiders to see and judge for themselves. The trip will take two or three days; we shall go by motor, of course, and shall arrive, like Father Christmas, grown scornful of the calendar, laden with every form of luxury. I think that cigarettes, magazines, cheap Russian sweets and cotton-wool can, without exaggeration, be termed luxury nowadays. We are told that the road which we shall travel is like a fairy pathway of spring scents and flowers. It is splendid to have something to look forward to at last, because certainly all that we find in memory to feed upon steeps us in gloom. Nor is the present particularly exhilarating!

## CHAPTER XI

*April 1917.*—We have returned from our expedition, and into no three days of any one of our separate existences have we crammed such interest.

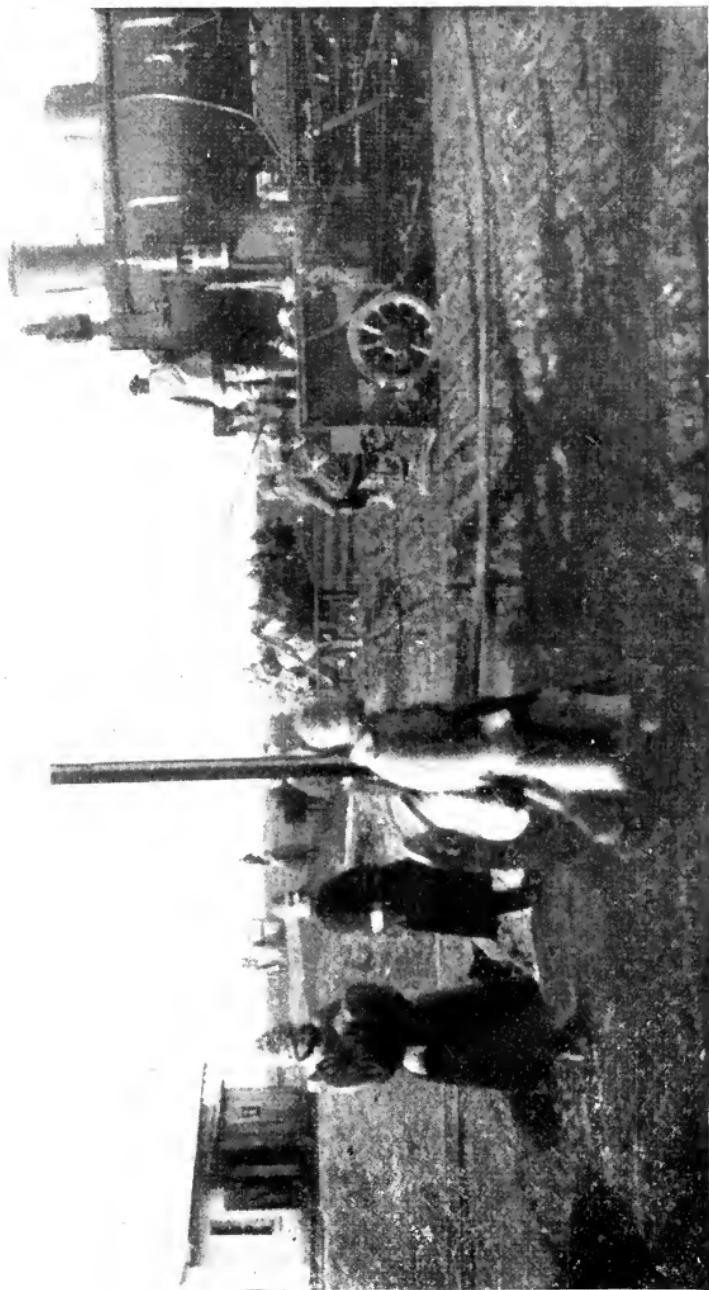
We started by averaging forty kilometres an hour for seven hours over things deserving of any name but roads. The two cars were seventy-five horse-power, and at times we ran ten or twenty miles at eighty. I personally was obliged to double up and cling to the seat in front of me, having had the misfortune to grow only small and light. Quite frankly, I was terrified of bumping out. It was a jaw-shattering experience into which nerves could not even enter, for they died before they were born. The road of tree-branches looked like corduroy at times, at others like the board for a game played at Early Victorian charity bazaars where one pulled a trigger and a little wooden ball made for a field of smooth cup-like holes.

These were the mud ponds that marked the passage of munition wagons in the winter, and which had not had time to dry. The filth which splashed when we took them at full speed obliterated the sunlight and mixed a curious colour with the blueness of the sky. The road grew better as we neared Roman. Roumanians and Russians have rebuilt it entirely, and done their work extraordinarily well. All the bridges were new, and damp mortar oozed from the brick spaces. The country there is almost the loveliest in Roumania, like Sinaia, but unspoilt by Swiss cottage decoration. After we had been skating round the horrible curves for an hour or so, I began to be able to see things, and felt as if I were in a high-class cinema at home. We met all the things pictured in illustrated papers like the *Graphic* or the *London News*. We must have passed 10,000 tethered horses camped under trees, with their supply wagons all interlaced with branches so as to hide them from enemy observers. And all the photographs which one remembered of wisps of smoke, resting men, and rifles leaning three-legged against one another suddenly took shape, threw shadows, and had

meaning. As we neared the front the piles of munitions grew to mountains and we passed miles and miles of wire entanglements, up and down hills with loopholed crests. We saw trenches where we expected to find cow-sheds, and cowsheds in the places where trenches obviously ought to have been. Great stationary kitchens, where stained canvas tents sent forth surprisingly appetising whiffs spread themselves straight across the road at regular intervals, and streams of carts laden with bread headed away from them in all directions of the compass. We got mixed up at times with the stragglers of regiments on the march, and we watched the field kitchens actually distributing soup and picking up bread as they moved forwards so as not to waste time whilst soldiers fed. Most of the things that happened took place in peaceful meadows near streams which cuddled into wild flowered nooks to cool the almost summer heat. We pushed forward to within two miles of the front-line trenches, and watched shells bursting in the air over a ridge of hills that split two wooded valleys. And then, towards sunset, we met double pony stretchers bring-

ing back the wounded from the first field-dressing station, and at this point distinguished the rattle of the muskets when we left the car to climb a little way up the hillside on foot.

A Russian aide-de-camp met us to point out our quarters, which turned out to be prepared for us in one of the little white rest-houses, lately built, which had fronted the last mile of roadway. Russian Easter-time was just over, and each was festooned inside under the rafters with branches of pine wood, and clusters of fresh golden cones that hung like chandeliers. Those which sheltered the General and Medical Staffs were marked with flags and red crosses respectively; the others, where soldiers were billeted, had the numbers of the units picked out in black relief over the wooden doors. The beds in these rest-houses were as clean and white as those in a country house in England, and we found the luxury of a clean towel hanging from a nail at the foot of each. Original tree-stumps had been left to pierce the floor as tables, and roughly baked ovens made of mud formed queer-shaped stoves. Everything inside was



EVEN ENGINES CARRIED HUMAN FREIGHT DURING THE RETREAT



permeated with the clean fresh smell of newly felled pines.

I never saw anything so simple, clean and business-like in all my life. A capital little hospital built of white planks stands at a turning of the main street of this emergency village. It is hemmed in by a graveyard, where white crosses mark the last sleeping-place of those Russian soldiers who can never return except in spirit to their homes. Russian Red Cross nurses work here, ladies all. The one who cooked our meals, a girl of eighteen, was the daughter of the Chief of the Staff of one of the big generals, taking her month's duty in the kitchen, as must all in turn. The others were mostly wives of generals. The hospital sends out light ambulances and horse stretchers to the front-line trenches in the hills at regular intervals and to appointed places. A nurse and a doctor invariably accompany them on foot. The work is very light just now, as there has been no heavy fighting, only occasional firing. The hospital was practically empty, but the five men who lay there were all dying, three of tetanus and two of meningitis. A train service has been instituted between these base

hospitals and the big convalescent camps at Odessa, and seems to be running marvellously well.

We received a cheerful welcome from all: from the sun-burned nurses dressed in white to the wild-looking soldiers in smoke-coloured cloth who sported love-locks and great shaggy beards. Little tossing trout streams freshened the air, and the black smoke-clouds of bursting shells added to the artistic effects. Only the wounded seemed out of place, and there were very few of those.

We feasted royally in the officers' mess, and toasted one another in purple vodka which was pure alcohol; there is nothing else left. A doctor arrived from Odessa just in time for dessert, and brought a box of sweets and the latest French books. Afterwards we turned in and slept most royally, more care-free than we had lain for many weeks.

At sunrise we were accompanied on a tour of inspection, and not even a hidden garbage-heap obtruded to spoil the wonderful atmosphere of a clean sunlit world. Even the pony stretchers managed to look cheerful, because the beasts are covered with white sheepskins, and all the sheets, blankets

and pillow-cases were not only white, but clean. All harness gleamed and jingled, the carts were solid, and the canvas coverings new. Those soldiers who filed away past us towards the distance and the firing line sang harmoniously in cadences, and their officers drove with them in shining little victorias where even the varnish was undimmed. A priest accompanies all units, and marches either with the men, or leads the head of the column on horseback side by side with the general or chief commanding officer.

I felt almost shy of distributing the little presents which had been prepared with such infinite care far away in the turmoil of Jassy, but those nice men gave uncouth shouts, which were much more expressive than mumbled thanks when I gave the cigarettes. They are, one and all, just like overgrown children, and have the smile of little babies at the lined corners of their eyes. Roumania will certainly be left with a legacy of fair, blue-eyed children; the idylls obtruded pleasantly wherever we had the indiscretion to wander. But the Russians are a splendid race, and their blood can but strengthen and invigorate a Latin and often gipsy strain.

Alas! the return journey, which traced for us yet another road, cast some shadows over the brightness of all we had found to praise. There has been time enough to trim and polish only the fringes of such an army, and, gradually, things turned from white to grey, then back to brown. We passed through deserted villages where decayed carcasses of beasts had stained the road. Their streets were piled in pyramids where the snow had but half melted from the mud-heaps, and refuse strewed the whole country-side. Those troops we met aped travelling gipsies; their creaking carts dangled pots and pans from harness ropes and torn canvas covers. All uniforms were rain-washed and tattered brown and blue. Then would come a cluster of hovels, heralded by a sign-post: "No troops are to be billeted here"; some one would whisper: "Typhus—*infection*," and we would whirl onwards, leaving in the dust clouds a sad loneliness of mud, lean beasts, and children aged before their time who never raised their sunken eyes to stare.

The trip had lasted just seventy hours, yet we felt that all the surroundings of Jassy ought by rights to have changed completely

for our return. We were completely disillusioned.

*Later.*—There has been a mild Cabinet crisis while we were away, on the questions of private and Government property and the future of Roumanian peasants after the war. But the Government still stands firm.

A good deal of revolutionary disaffection is making itself felt amongst the Russian troops in Jassy, who have nothing to do. The officers are rather in awe of their men, who seem to have a gentle upper hand in the management of their own affairs. Every division, battalion, company, etc., has its own committee of soldiers, which cuts it off from all pretence of military discipline as we know it, but which manages, nevertheless, to keep admirable order. Unfortunately it is rather obvious that the only thing which they actively desire is a peace that would allow them to return to their own homes and put their own country in order. Red flags wave all over the town, and there have been mass meetings advertised with pamphlets announcing that: “We want peace without confiscation of territories and without war indemnities.” All this is disturbing; not that

it in any way alters the course of the war, but it cannot help lengthening the struggle. I am afraid that there is little hope now of a big spring offensive. Of course the optimists amongst us maintain that this is nothing but froth at the top of the bottle and that there is good wine underneath. Certainly the men, who, after all, could do as they liked with this town, are very tractable. They sang hymns as they marched towards the public square where the meetings were held, and were not even a little drunk. We hear that they invited the French soldiers to come, and that a non-commissioned officer who was "all there" replied: "We should be delighted to attend, but, unless you get us leave from our officers, shall not be able to do so, as it would be against the regulations. We hope, however, that you will make the request." Needless to say, the Russians took the hint and didn't. The Russian privates took a red cockade to their general in command, and said: "We know you won't wear it, but we bring it as a sign of our friendship." He replied: "You are quite wrong. I will wear it on the day when we can speak of Victory." Oh dear! If I were a Russian general now,

what a big man I should be. I'd pin a red cockade to every officer's tunic and tie a scarlet sash round my own, and say to my men: "You are in the right. We join you—now lead on and fight to win." They are such children, these big, gentle, hairy men, easily led and most impossibly driven.

The shadow of disease is lifting a little. Practical advantage has been taken of this interval of inanition, and large quantities of necessary stores arrive daily from Russia. And the food difficulty has become insignificant. The town is no longer trebly overcrowded—just very full. A great number of private enterprises for the relief of the country population have sprung into being. These work along orderly systems, and are not too exaggeratedly lacking in funds. All things official are naturally reserved for the Red Cross, which is now efficiently organised. All that the country needs is time and material: capabilities and a moderate enthusiasm are decidedly here, but have not had a fair chance of demonstrating hitherto. Every eye is fixed on Russia, because the only thing that we know for certain is, that whatever waves flood our northern ally will engulf us too. I

personally have such a profound confidence in all things Russian, now that I have seen with my own eyes what they are capable of accomplishing, that I refuse to entertain the supposition that they can diverge towards wrong channels. But they are not made of stuff that can be influenced by harrying.

*Later.*—We have had another unexpected treat in the shape of a second visit of inspection—this time to the British and French Red Cross Hospitals near the firing line. Our own was simply splendid. It is the unit which has received the largest amount of English stores, and a great many of the appendages were of stereotyped pattern. Nevertheless, we marvelled at the ingenuity displayed in supplementing those things which were unavoidably lacking. We saw the whole system at work in low wooden buildings painted white. All the furniture was home-made and enamelled; there were even screens which folded tidily and sported a big Maltese Cross on the opening panel. White walls were finished with a dado of Roumanian colours, and matched benches and beds of smooth white wood. The blankets of soft British wool were folded so as to leave upper-



Russo-Romanian Army Service Corps During the Retreat



most the quiet Red Cross of St. John. The whole staff is English, and is worshipped by the men. At Eastertime the latter bribed the night watchman to smuggle in Easter greens, and the nurses woke to find their dining-room wreathed on Easter morning and a tree on the breakfast-table, where swung a heart-shaped pendant of fresh violets. The surgeons received a telegram of "Heartfelt gratitude for the kindness shown to us Roumanian soldiers."

We saw the convalescents planting seeds of flowers and vegetables out of doors, and noticed that all wore wooden sandals made by their own artisans. In every other hospital the men go barefoot. They have built a pigsty and a cowshed, because one of the nurses is a farmer's daughter and competent to care for livestock. The staff goes out and raids the country at intervals in the St. John's ambulance car for food that runs. I never met a nicer, happier spirit in any place where people have suffered. The two English surgeons live in a big private house belonging to an old lady, who feels that Heaven has sent her two nice big sons and who adores them both. They are very good to her, and

take it in turns to sit up late at night and talk to her, as they have discovered that she loves it. She is very rich, and has developed a proprietary interest in the whole hospital, and keeps it supplied with little luxuries.

The country on every side was pasture-land, and the background of all we saw was emerald green.

*Later.*—We are going through another local crisis, this time a violent attack on the Government. It is idle to speculate upon what would happen here if it went out. That the control should be forcibly upset again, just when it has really taken hold and is doing well, would be a disastrous pity. After all, what does it matter who governs a country so long as the country improves and thrives more visibly every day? The restoration of order that has come to pass has been so imperceptibly born that it is only in quiet moments, when one has an opportunity to visualise things as they were a few short weeks ago, that one can appreciate the stupendous amount that has been accomplished. When solid foundations have been laid it would appear sheer lunacy to hunt out a new building site. Patriotism has always existed

here, and self-confidence is just coming. Successful action will be the fruit of both if things are left to work out their own salvation. At a big military review the other day, a small boy of six, dressed in full military uniform, was hoisted on to a table and delivered a patriotic speech to the assembled crowd of soldiers, officers and generals. The finish was curiously Eastern: one remembers how a slight boyish figure, drowned in blood, wails a falsetto introduction to the Passion Plays of Persia and Turkey before the martyrdom of Hussein and Hassan is portrayed on the stage. The enthusiasm here was quite as flaming as one had ever felt it in the countries of Mohammed, and some of the soldiers cried. The idea is but the crudest principle of nature. Man has ever been stirred by woman, and nothing can move a woman so spontaneously as a child.

This whole city gives the impression of having started now to work in earnest. We are quietly, reasonably and systematically preparing for war. And it is dull work. These political agitations are purely the result of inaction upon awakened minds. Had we ammunition now and the original enthusi-

asm for conquest, I am certain that the Germans would be scattered out of Wallachia like chaff before the wind. Existing circumstances are so wonderfully comfortable compared to all that we survived in the winter that we stand in great danger of becoming too contented to move again before the war is over. Individuals feel it themselves. We women have no work to do, and the inaction is paralysing. I laze all day in a spring-time garden where birds twitter and crickets sing. Then I go to bed and sleep badly because I overslept all day. Every now and then a busy morning threatens when trains of Red Cross material steam in from Russia. But an organising presence has become almost superfluous. There is transport galore, and all the subordinates know their business.

We indulge in occasional motor picnics outside the town, and have noticed that the peasants are gradually losing their hunted look and are beginning to fill their rags of clothes. This is thanks to the good and efficient work done quietly by the relief commissions.

It is hard to decide whether it is the

warmth and sunshine which has given us such semblance of settled peace, or whether only a little order, a little time and a few skilled workmen would have assured it to us straight on from the beginning.

## CHAPTER XII

*May* 1917.—We are told that we stand upon the brink of action. Certain it is that at no time since she entered the war has Roumania stood to the fight so well prepared as now. In retrospect, it is wonderful to realise all that has been accomplished despite inexperience and shortage of material. The word “starvation” makes us smile nowadays, for we are almost surfeited by the luxury of supplies brought by regular transport systems from Russia. Further, the whole undulating surroundings of Jassy are cloaked green with growing corn. A peaceful surety of general well-being envelops us. My little deserted garden is pushing up all sorts of flowers whose impetus was their own, for they sowed themselves, blown hither by winds from the woods. Roses are budding regardless of horticultural rules, for wistaria has only just begun to uncurl its tendrils and promises no flower. I think that it must have

got discouraged at finding no spring to glorify. We missed that season altogether this year and leapt from winter into summer, so I take it that the wistaria is sulking now. The dust lies ankle-deep on the roads, but somehow it feels quite different from the disease-laden powder of autumn. So much disinfectant has been strewn just lately that the very air brings whiffs of it to strengthen the contrast with perfume of flowers and herbs. We have been able to make a little jam with cherries and gooseberries brought from outlying gardens. Also some marmalade as a result of a gift of oranges from Odessa. I sacrificed at least two future winter breakfasts by succumbing to the temptation of eating one when they arrived. It was the best thing that I ever tasted.

It seems hard lines on the new Roumanian army that their Russian allies should be in trouble now, as it is difficult to believe that a country like Russia can get under way again quickly. The evolution must surely take years. It is curious to contrast the present attitude of mind in Russia with the one that has gradually crept over the Roumanian population. When they first went forth to fight,

I doubt whether one man out of ten knew the real reason of his going. In general their enthusiasm was at that time merely for war, for the desire to kill had blown over their country. But now they have formed their ideal of a fight for Peace, and seeing their country tortured has made them understand that they love the soil and want to make it well. They love their English allies, and it has been a pleasant discovery to find in them only augmentation of loyalty and trust. The army is well fed now, and well clothed; the men have had time to rest, to look backwards, and to remember where they went wrong. They have had a chance to learn which of their officers to follow and those amongst their comrades who require to be led. One has only to watch them march by nowadays to mark the difference in their carriage and the concerted drumming of their hobnailed boots. And they have borrowed cadenced songs from the Russians, who sing no longer now that they no longer march.

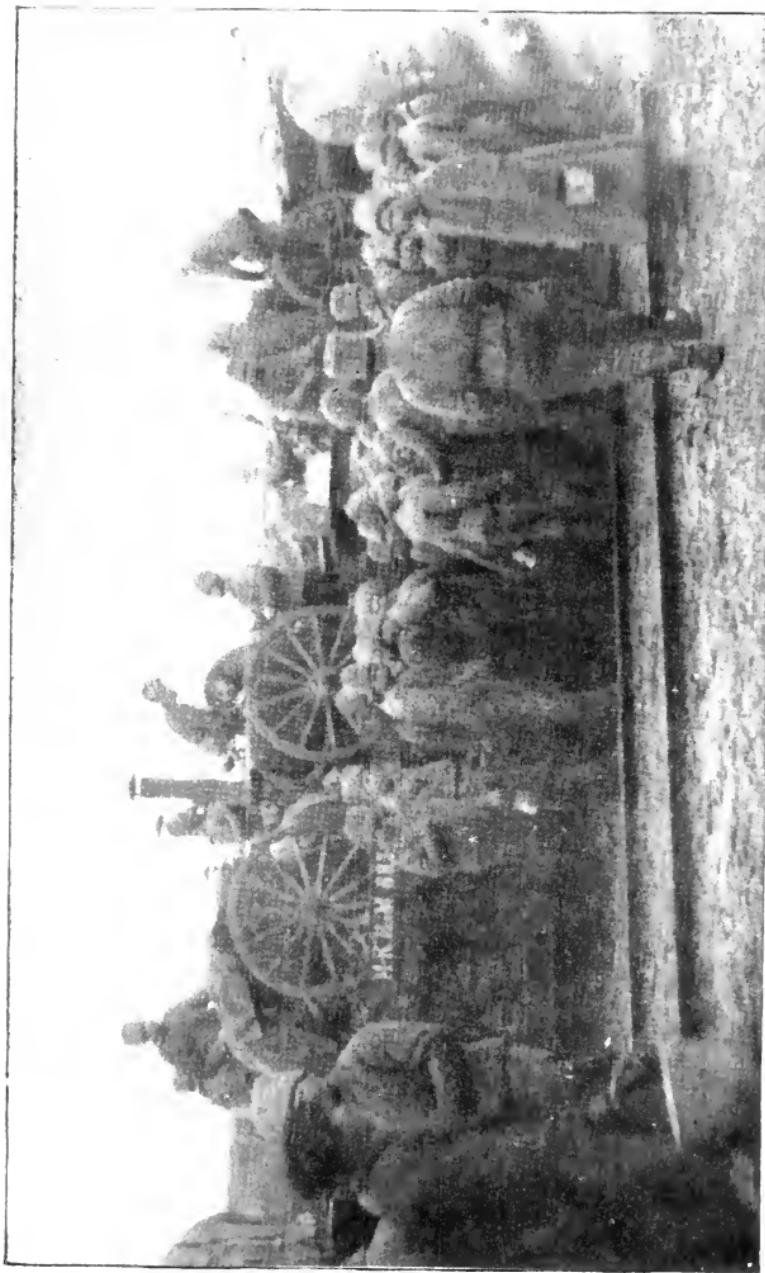
Needless to say, there is much that still remains to be done. The army no longer starves for the necessities, such as ammunition and sanitary supplies, but it hungers for

delicacies and details. These will all come, in time, I suppose, just as the other and more immediate requirements came; but it would be a tragic mistake to launch forth again without them. The Roumanians, luckily, realise the danger of such action, and their leaders are too clever to stumble into the pitfall of foolhardiness which always lurks for those who have lately escaped from danger. But the army, as a whole, is straining to take the offensive, and it is so wonderful that the men should feel thus after all that they have suffered that it seems almost cruel to tie their hands. English and French officers alike agree that a capital fighting force has grown up, no one quite knows how, out of the demoralisation of the last few months, and it is impossible to give a sufficiency of credit to the leaders who have built it up.

The King has undoubtedly proved himself a great man in this war. Few could have sunk all personal interest and sympathies before pure patriotism of the most altruistic kind as he has done, and I think that the power of the throne, even in this century of socialistic tendencies, makes itself felt here

now as would have seemed impossible a bare two years ago. Be it also remembered that he has had to help him a woman who is beautiful and brilliant, and who is, besides, his Queen.

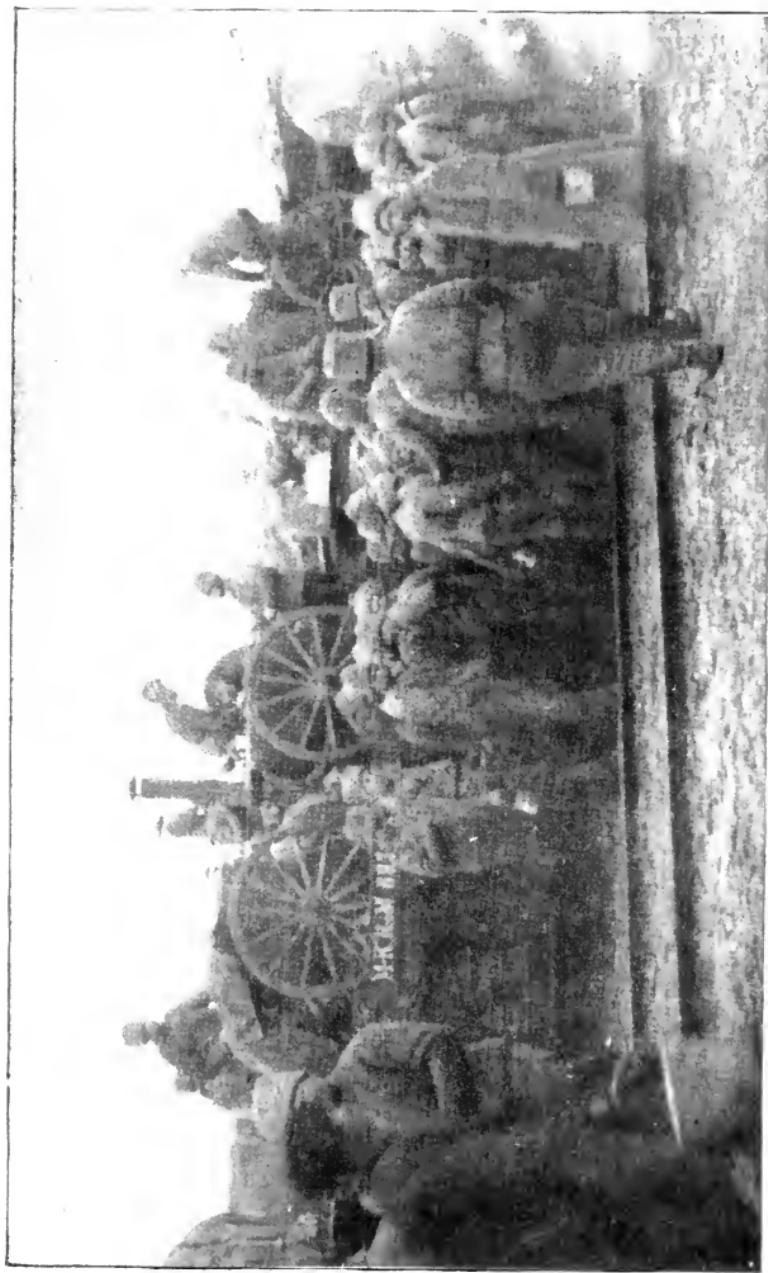
It is a disconcerting testimony to the pettiness of human nature to be obliged to record that now, after all the sufferings that we have witnessed and which we, ourselves, escaped by just a miracle, the only thing that actively disturbs our tranquillity should be a plague of flies! I simply cannot begin to describe the extent to which they worry us. A few fly-papers saved from amongst our original stores from home have saved our reason. I bought yards and yards of the wedding veiling which peasant women use and nailed it outside all the windows, but even so, after two or three hours, my papers were black. People come and beg most piteously for "Just one paper." And when I feel generous I give it to them, and then wake up in the night and regret my action. Now that my stock is low, I have invented a substitute of melted resin and corrosive sub-limate, mixed with a little oil to prevent the mixture hardening. However, I was only able



FIELD WORKERS AT WORK IN A LOCAL STATION DURING THE RUSSIAN RETREAT

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to obtain two kilos of resin, and had to send to Russia for that. We had one small resulting tragedy from my ingenuity: for a little while we have owned two baby jackdaws, who hop about all over the house, and one of them stuck to a fly-paper. Such a turmoil as rose was never heard before. They are huge little birds, very amusing, affectionate and friendly, who cannot yet eat alone. They fell out of their nest and adopted us, to become our constant delight. I never believed that the tale of the Jackdaw of Rheims was anything but a fairy story before, but I must confess that these little beasts steal everything that shines.

It has been interesting to discover what solace can be found in days of the most anxious uncertainty by contact with things young and care-free. All the English children were sent home months ago, and we miss their atmosphere so horribly that anything small and happy finds welcome here. I have noticed that Roumanians who took but the most cursory interest in a nursery world before they went to war have become almost ostentatiously parental lately. The whole aspect of Jassy has lost the impression it

used to give of having been a most ill-chosen picnic site where it had very lately and copiously rained. We can almost flatter ourselves that we live in a flourishing military centre. French blue and grey and English khaki almost predominate about the streets now that the Russian units have moved into scattered canvas cities. For it is significant of new and extremely salutary military discipline to note that it is only the officers who wander except when actually off duty. I never could have credited the possibility of Roumania boasting a town that did not announce itself as primarily built for pleasure, yet, nowadays, not even a Bosche *caserne* could look more business-like. It gives an overwhelming sense of satisfaction to drive past the big buildings lately built for storage, and to recall the wastage lying on their sites some bare weeks ago. One or two restaurants have opened and do a roaring trade, and the shops have begun to sport tentative wares in their windows.

Our own house is no longer the “English Hotel.” We only have as guests those strangers we want to see. Because the hotels have become more or less normal, and have

been known to promise a room for a certain date, and offer it, all prepared when that date came, with linen, hot water and a bed. Local papers make their appearance daily on our breakfast-tables, and tell the news of the world in the same fashion as do their big brothers in England—that is to say, they keep us interested and teach us just nothing at all. A theatre has opened in the centre of the town, and our charity *matinées* have tried to rival the accounts of London. Proportionately astonishing was the financial profit. It appears that, even in Roumania, there are still a few rich men. Naturally those land-owners whose property lies in Moldavia have accrued to themselves worldly goods which their Wallachian brothers lost, and the credit of the country is as good as is possible when the whole machinery has been disorganised.

Further, for the first time in history there is real understanding between the peasant and his landlord—still embryonic, naturally, but nevertheless latent and productive of a sympathetic atmosphere. I have come across hundreds of cases of unostentatious charity just lately, and the Roumanian peasant is a

very loyal, grateful soul, who, like all of us, finds it pleasant to be spoilt.

Life became so monotonous when passed in a continual state of tension which never knew the satisfaction of an actual happening to give it *raison d'être*, that we have become rather sociable and have begun to give little dinner parties. Luckily we can listen to good music, because there is genius in the race, and I have garnered many pleasant memories of temporary oblivion to the crude realities of life brought by cadences which seem, in retrospect, to echo from a half-forgotten world. Foretaste of a peace that shall be lasting comes in the golden evenings, which see us motor southwards through pine woods and along roads of transfigured dust towards the little villages which only a miracle has saved from ruin. Almost invariably we find some tunester whose instinct has made him wander home, where once, before he went to war, his music taught all young things to dance. *Joie de vivre* dies hard, and he usually only requires to be found before he starts to play. And youth, which cannot die, collects and catches rhythm which we are not allowed to know, because it lies in a future

which is not ours. Just to watch, however, brings us sufficiency of contentment.

*June 1917.*—I have been wondering whether any one would care to read this diary. Roumania is deserving of notice and appreciation. She has proved herself, and in the greatest manner which does not savour of ostentation. All that has been lately accomplished spells silent work and no small devotion to what has grown in this our century to be the greatest cause. Strangers who had knowledge and experience, who came to put machinery in motion, remain here, it is true. But they stay to work, and are no longer required to lead. The army trusts its officers, the nation appreciates its King. And we outsiders feel that we want to go home and tell the family of Allies that our little brother Roumania has grown into a man of whom we have reason to be very proud.

THE END





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